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*Verney Letters of the  
Eighteenth Century from  
the MSS. at Claydon House*





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Catherine [Paschall], Countess Verney, with John.

*Verney Letters of the  
Eighteenth Century from  
the MSS. at Claydon House*

edited by

*Margaret Maria Lady Verney*  
*LL.D.*

with portraits and pedigrees

vol. ii

*London*  
*Ernest Benn Ltd.*

D A485 .V4

1930

v. 2



FIRST PUBLISHED IN

1930

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY

R. & R. CLARK, LTD., EDINBURGH





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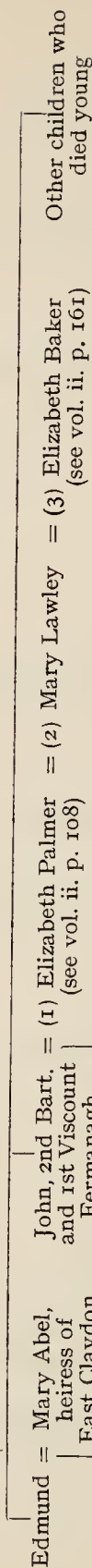
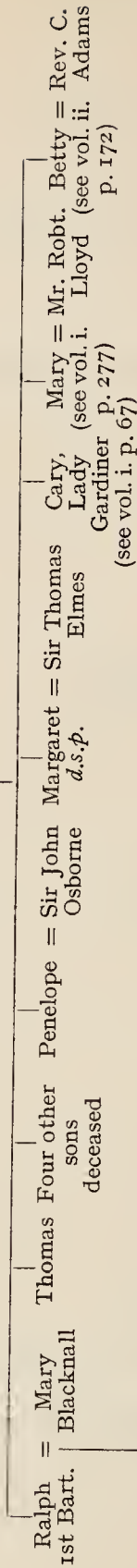
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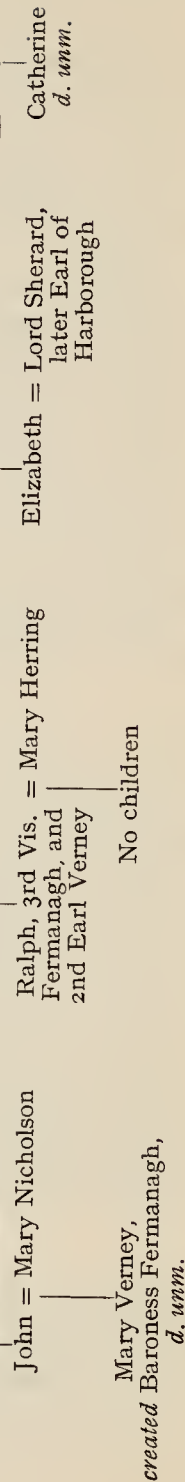
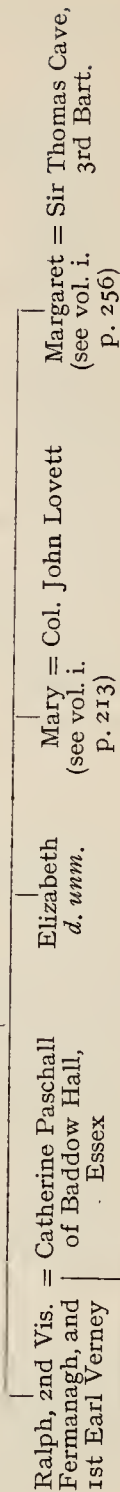
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# VERNEYS OF CLAYDON

SIR EDMUND VERNEY = MARGARET DENTON  
Kt. Marshal and  
Standard Bearer to  
Charles I.



Descendants *d.* young



No children

Other children who died young



## BOOK I—*Continued*

1696-1717

“More Art, together with more hours of leisure, would have made this a lesser Volume. For in writing of Books, as in carving of Statues, the cutting away of each superfluity is a work of skill and time.”—Archbishop TENISON.

## DRAMATIS PERSONAE OF BOOK I

- SIR JOHN VERNEY, Bart., later VISCOUNT FERMANAGH, Owner of Claydon House, Bucks.
- ELIZABETH, LADY VERNEY, later VISCOUNTESS FERMANAGH, *née* Baker, Third Wife of Sir John Verney.
- RALPH, ELIZABETH, MARY, and MARGARET VERNEY, Children of Sir John Verney by his First Wife, Elizabeth Palmer.
- CATHERINE, Wife of Ralph Verney, *née* Paschall.
- THOMAS VERNEY, Uncle to Sir J. V.
- CARY, LADY GARDINER, *née* Verney, Aunt of Sir J. V.
- JOHN, CARY, PENELOPE, CAROLINA, ISABELLA and KATHERINE STEWKLEY, Children of Lady G. by her Second Husband.
- MARGARET GARDINER, Daughter of Lady G. by her First Husband.
- ELIZABETH, MRS. ADAMS, *née* Verney, Aunt of Sir J. V., Widow of Rev. Charles Adams of Great Baddow, Essex.
- MARGARET and ISABELLA ADAMS, Daughters of Mrs. Adams.
- SIR HUGH STEWKLEY and Daughters.
- COLONEL JOHN LOVETT } Sons-in-law of Sir J. V.  
SIR THOMAS CAVE, Bart. }
- JOHN COLEMAN } Stewards to Sir J. V.  
CHARLES CHALLONER }
- PALMERS of Little Chelsea, Family of Sir J. V.'s First Wife.
- LAWLEYS of Shropshire, Family of Sir J. V.'s Second Wife.
- BAKERS of Hatton Garden and of } Family of Sir J. V.'s Third Wife.  
Penn, Bucks }
- NARCISSUS LUTTRELL, Wife and Son }
- REV. WILLIAM VICKERS, Cousin to Sir J. V. by Marriage.
- CAPTAIN VERNEY LLOYD } First Cousins to Sir J. V.  
MARY and RUTH LLOYD }
- Friends, Soldiers, Physicians, Lawyers, Keepers, Gardeners, Servants.

CHAPTER XXI  
THE NEW REIGN

WHENCE did the children's ditty come, that they should sing:

Queen Anne, Queen Anne, she sat in the Sun,  
As white as a lily—as brown as a bun!

She had so small a share of the Sun in her life, and latterly, in loneliness and failing health, she sat in the shade of the intrigues and quarrels of all those about her. Her Tory Ministers were wondering how they could safely send for the Pretender; the Whigs were taking anxious thought for safeguarding the Protestant Succession. The Queen's Will was by her bed, waiting to be signed; the Bishop of London remained in attendance, in case his ministrations could help her, but Anne never rallied from her lethargy, which, on Sunday morning early, August 1, 1714, ended in death. Her physician believed that the disputes among her servants hastened her end, and wrote to Dean Swift that "Sleep was never more welcome to a weary traveller than Death was to her".

On the steps of Whitehall the Heralds blew their trumpets, announcing the accession of His Gracious Majesty King George the First.

"On August 10, news came to the Elector of Hanover, sitting in his garden in the Orangerie, at Herrenhausen, that he had inherited three Crowns."

*Lord Fermanagh to Ralph Verney*

8 Aug.  
1714.

"Deare Ralph,—I had been in London ere now, but am prevented by a very sharp fitt of the Gout, which keeps me in my Chair, for with Two Crutches I cannot goe one yard from it. . . . When I shall be able to goe to London I can't tell and if I doe goe (to avoid the people's talk of my not being at the Parliamt.) my stay in Towne shall be as short as I can possibly make it. . . . I had

a letter from Lord Cheyne concerning Papists and Non-Jurors, but I know not of any that live in our Hundred of Asshenden.

This week King George was proclaimed with the usual rejoicings in the severall Markett Townes of this County."

There is a long list of the names of those that signed the Proclamation for King George.

24 Sept.  
1714.

*Lord Fermanagh to Ralph Verney*

"... I perceive matters go bravely on, far beyond my Expectations; happy are those that have no places to be turn'd out of, tho' fortunate are them that can get into 'Em."

In looking through the old letters it seemed so short a time, only a moment indeed in the long history of England, that Aunt Adams in her "crazy" old age was rejoicing that there would be no more foreign favourites, and no more English money going overseas.

Aunt Adams was still living, and still lamenting the pains and aches in her "old carkiss" (a word which has descended from the parlour to the slaughter-house), when Lord Fermanagh, in his neat handwriting, a little crippled by gout, was copying out a long list of the Ministers and place-men and their attendants that had just arrived with the new King.

"Part of those that came with King George from Hanover. Sept. 1714.

Baron Bernstorff .	.	First Ministr. of State.
Baron Gortz .	.	President of the Finances.
Count Platen .	.	Ld. H. Chamberlain.
M. Heremberg .	.	Marshal of the Court.
M. Kilmanseg .	.	Master of the Horse.
M. Gortz, junr. .	.	Chief Cupbearer.
M. Ohuhausen .	}	4 Chamberlains.
M. Rhede .		
M. Bernstorff, junr.		
M. Schulemberg .		
Marqs. de la Forest	}	4 Gentln. of the Bed Chambr.
Baron Schutz .		
M. Hammostein .		
M. Ohuhausen, junr.		
M. Hartof .	.	Councillr. of Warr.
M. Reich .	.	Councillr. of Justice.
M. Robethon .	.	Councillr. of the Embassy.

2 Secretaries	4 Valets de Chambre
2 Clerks	4 Pages
2 Phisitians	12 Footmen
2 Surgeons	1 Cashier
	2 Cooks
	Confectioners, etc."

*Ralph Palmer to Ralph Verney, at Claydon*9 Sept.  
1714.

"... We are all in expectations of our King when the Heavens will give him an auspicious gale, in kind exchange of A Regency for the Monarch. But none of us have curiosity enough to crowd for the sight of An Intrado. They talk of his coronation by the middle of the ensuing month. The worst news I hear is that one Richardson of Islington has lost forty or fifty beasts by a distemper that takes away their appetite from eating or drinking, and then seizes their head, of which they die. There is a periwig Maker too (one Brown) murdered by an Irishman (his throat cut) for expressing his joy at the accession of King George, he is committed to Newgate for it by Justice Peters the Surgeon. . . . Our little Spark runs better and better and is full of his gibberish, especially about hounds and horses, which is the best dormitive he has."

*Rev. W. Vickers to Lord Fermanagh*21 Sept.  
1714.

"The King between four and five passed by Bow Church, attended in his Coach by the Prince, the Earl of Northumberland, and the Lord Dorset; it was a noble show but none made so great a figure among the Jewish [?] Nobility like the Ld. T., tho' Ld. of Oxford rid backward and was soundly hissed, the D. of Marlborough as much Hollowed. The D. of Ormond a Saterdag night was told by the Lord Townsend the King had no more service for him, upon which his Grace immediately returned to Richmond without seeing his Majesty. There was 200 and six Coaches with Six Horses. Generall Stanhope, the Ld. Chiefe Justice Parker, the Bp. of Salisbury, the Ld. Pelham, ware all huzzaed. Generall Cadogan rid in the Chariot with the Duke of Marlborough, his Dutchess stood on the 7 Starres on Ludgate Hill. The Lord Chancellor, they say, presented the patternt a Saterdag night to the King for creating the Duke of Cambridge Prince of Wales; his Majesty told him he was not at Leisure, the Fees they say are £15,000 intended for his successour, the Lord Cooper. Tis said the Duke of Marlborough hath given his house at St. Jamesis to the King for the use of the Prince of Wales to be near him; the Lord Chancellor today at 12 they say was dismissed. Coll. Chudleigh and Mr. Oldsworth to-day had some words about the D. of Marl-



borough in the Court, and went out and fought a Duel; the latter was killed on the spot. Mr. Verney and his Lady does us the honour tomorrow morning to breakfast with us.

Tis said the King with two private Gentlemen walked the other morning round the Park, and over the Ruins of Whitehall. [Burnt in 1697.] Miss Pen comes to our winter quarters in the middle of next week, and if your Honour will buy a good Padd, shee will let you a good pennyworth."

"In George the First, there was little to attract, though there was much to command respect; for he was cast in a manly mould, and veracity and trustworthiness were inborn in his nature.

He had given abundant proof of military ability and courage and he was fond of the pastimes which in his day commended themselves to his class."<sup>1</sup>

30 Sept.  
1714.

*Ralph Palmer to Ralph Verney*

"... I find my Lord is not yet resolved about standing for a Parlt. man, but I guess by his demurring he will. ... I heard from Sir Thomas, who is scared out of his wits at the new turn of affaires: he talks of loosing Eleven employs, of more cost than profit. I know not what he means, but if so I think they are better lost than found. ... There have been great feuds at Court about the acquisition of places. I heare that his Majesty will sit in the Treasury himself, where no more Tallys shall be issued but ready money; that he is much surprised at the vast debts there are, of which I suppose he has heard little before; that he rises early, dines at one, goes to bed at ten, is often abroad incognito, has been seen at some Coffee Houses, is an extraordinary good Accountant, and will be a great Manager for good husbandry, which I hope the nation too will be better for."

9 Oct.  
1714.

*Margaret Adams to Lord Fermanagh*

"... A pretty Lady called Mrs. West coming to us on Thursday night ingaged us at nine Cards, where we fairly beat the Whiggs, and that I hope your Lordsp. will allow to be a just excuse for my omission that night, and pray your Lordsp. and all honest gentlemen that stand for their country gain as glorious a victory as we obtained that night. We are now with the Captain and his Lady at Cousen Ruth Lloyd's lodging, toasting our friends at Claydon in Claret and Orange, and he would fain have me date my letter from the going up Holborn Hill. ... I beg you'll tell my Lady Fermanagh that if she please to come to town she may play at Court for a

<sup>1</sup> *Cambridge Modern History.*

small Sum, his Majty. plaing t'other day att the Dutchess of Shrosberry's, lost 15s. at peny ombre. I was angry at his ill run, having not lost so much since he came to England. As for the Prince's diversion, it consists pretty much in drinking, which has the same effect on him as upon Sir Wm. Boughton, which must make him a Charming bedfellow. . . . I hope your Lordsp. will come up and see our famous Corronation, and then we shall have your good Company."

*Penelope Vickers to Lord Fermanagh*

19 Oct.  
1714.

"My Lord,—I can't but think you much in the right of not taking any notice of the late Bridegroom [Captain Verney Lloyd] in our family, he carries it off with a high hand, keepes a good table, and open house to all that visit them. She has given his Sister a silver snuff box of hers, I guess about 20 Shill. prize . . . there is great Braggs of his Stanford friends Congratulations and invitations to them, and his Baddow friends visit as soon as they came to town. The Rising Son is generally Corted, but if I must weaken mine by setting the old ones by, soe be it, for that I shall not doe. . . . Cozen Boate's Husband I hear is to be an Irish Judge, what I hear a thousand a yeare or neere it. . . . Tomorrow being our Showe Day here I shall not stir out, having noe fancy for it; there is so many Changes these days there will be none left to make in a Little time unless he that makes them Turn Innside out. . . . I beg you to burn my Letters as sone as you have read them, and keep all to yourself that I or my Spouse sais, for there are too many Jelious of our sending you word of all we know and hear."

This marriage of Capt. Verney Lloyd and Miss Gery was unreasonably disliked by some of the family, but through them another branch of the Verneys has come down; and though the name has been dropped, there are some seventeen living descendants, chiefly clergy, of Sir Edmund the Standard-Bearer.

*Rev. W. Vickers to Lord Fermanagh*

11 Nov.  
1714.

". . . Mr. Fountain's House in Yorkshire by the Carelessness of a Servant is burnt down. The Lady Pickle-herring, The Lady Christian with Mistress Pen played at Cards a Thursday last, the Former wants a dram out of the Golden Bottle. In the Prints you will see a List of our New Livetenances, I hear your Country are very angry with Mr. Hamden. The King, Prince and Princess, was to see Cato acted last night."

An Englishwoman who has married in France writes to Mrs. Vickers from Bordeaux. The signature has perished.

15 Nov.  
1714.

"... My Husband's kindred here are extreem civill to me, but complyzance is so natural to the French makes it quite time to Judge of their Reality. . . . My being Obliged from England is an unspeakable loss to me, having left all my acquaintance, I know they can have but a small miss of me, I being but one, mine is very great. I reflect on these things too frequent for my repose. . . . Their manner of Performing their religion in this place is insufferable superstitious, twould be the heaviest affliction of my life to See either of mine forego their good education and practise the error of that Church. . . . After a very sick Voiage for fifteen days wee arrived safe in this place, which falls short of what I expected it, all things proving extreme dear."

30 Oct.  
1714.

*Elizabeth Verney to Mrs. Ralph Verney*

"Deare Sister,—My Brother's unlucky Accident has given me a great deal of concern, I hope he continues Mending. . . . Our Lady has had some of her tanterums as Vapors comeing out etc., but is I Think att present much better in health then good conditions, so I believe no danger of looseing her. Mrs. Baker and her two eldest daughters went up to the Coronation, and the three next rid over hither to pay their Respects to their Dear Aunt, and comefort her with Something by way of Letter or Message—but she had as good bin without it, for A Violent Fitt of the Vapors immediately insued; the Cause was obvious to all but one, and they are fated to be Blind, so no help for it. The Girls stayed but two days, their expedition being unknown to their Father. . . . Chriss is not yet wedd, but will be I believe very soon, we are like to have a Rare piece of Stuff in her place; Mrs. Baker's Nursary Maid, a sickly Creature not thought worthy to be prefar'd in their house, but if She's good att Information, I presume it's the Cheif of what's required here."

30 Oct.  
1714.

*Ralph Palmer to Ralph Verney*

"I cannot forbear to express my great concern for that ill accident which has befallen my Dear and Best Nephew; Sure the Quadrupedes are all betwottled, but for Jenny Mare's misde-menour there is nothing that I know of to have thrown but her past and long and faithfull Services and her great years, I hope you will not confide in her any more. It was a Great Providence you were not killed, and your dear Good Precious did (as she always does) most tenderly and discreetly in her applications to you.

I have been this week at the Temple and find it is the Generall opinion that the power of the Whiggs will be very short lived; the D. of M. has had severall Reprimands from the two greatest men, and his own friends fall off from him, he is so greedy in the acquisi-



tion of places, that the Great Man told him the other day the Archbp. of C. had been with him three hours in his Closet, and he believed he was a very honest good man for he had not asked him for one place in all that Time. All men agree that he (the King) is a Man of great Judgment, which (no question) Time and a little more notice of things will improve. The Archbp. of York told him that he might depend upon it that among the Tõrys he wanted not Able and Hearty friends (however he might be misinformed) that would be faithful and zealous to serv him. Lord Wharton was complimenting the eldest Daughter of the Prince, about 7 years old, and she told him his Lordsp. was a great Courtiare and Flatterer of the Ladies, She had heard of his Fame before she come from Hanover. I find he has bin too hard for the Buckinghamshire Conclave, and he promised that he would set up Mr. Grenvill only, and now Hamden stands with him, which I fear will carry all. . . . I wonder your sister mentions not the exploit of Mr. Greenvil's plundering the House & carrying away his Father, sure you hear of it, for tis certainly so, and they are at Highgate.

I am sorry your dear Boy has beat out his teeth, Nature I hope will soon supply that defect; mine did not sleep last night till after midnight for want of his marbles, a new purchase that he is very fond of, he improves now every day and I wish I could not say does in our Affections so much."

The Archbishop of Canterbury was Tenison, in the last year of his office; famed for his disinterested and simple life. The Archbishop of York was Sharp, a strong Tory, who had been the special friend and adviser of Queen Anne.

Princess Anne, afterwards the Princess Royal, is mentioned in Countess Cowper's Diary as a miracle for her age, speaking English very prettily; so she could cope with Lord Wharton better than most members of her family.

*Rev. W. Vickers to Lord F.*

2 Nov.  
1714.

"My Lord,—I believe you have good Skill to make and to sing Ballads, such qualifications are peculiar to our City musicians. A Munday last we had four of the Princesses's Bedchamber Ladies to dine with us, Guy Palmes, one of the tellers of the Exchequer, Esquire Ogle, Capt. of the First Troop of Guards, the Lady Adams Governess to the two young Princesses, and the Lady Christian Matchmaker Generall for the Court of Great Britaine. Dr. Radclif last night fell asleep, and hath left four score thousand pounds to Oxford. Pray take care of all my books and lying Pamphlets. Mrs. Gery hath seen her son-in-law [Captain Verney Lloyd] and both dined with her last week.

The King the day he dined in the City gave a thousand pounds to the poor Prisoners, the Prince and Princess walk most days in the Park between 12 and one. The Princess with her children goe every day to prayers at 10 [ten]. We are both sorry for Mr. Verney's fall, Mistress Pen gives her humble service to her dear Lord, and soe doth the Evill Dr. Your Honrs. Secretary and Scribe W. V.

I hear there was a riott at Winslow."

17 July  
1714.

Lady Cave wrote from Stanford hoping that her father was not the worse for his "Attendance in that hott Town. We are like to have a quiet election here I hope, noone has yet offered to oppose Sir Geffry Palmer."

This was written about a fortnight before the Queen's death. The election was a very stormy one. Sir Thomas Cave's letters have shown how bad a time a Tory candidate had to face in the new reign.

24 Dec.  
1714.

*Sir Henry Hoare to Lord Fermanagh*

"... I am sorry that your Lordship has been misinformed as to the Choice the Citty of London of Common Councill Men, for I assure your Lordship we shall still have a Considerable Majority in the Church Interest, tho' there has been the greatest endeavours yoused on the Other Side; which is the Truest Testimony the Citty of London can give of those Sentiments which I hope will allways be for Monarchy and the Church, and at this Time for no Warr."

24 Dec.  
1714.

*Elizabeth Verney, at Stanford, to Ralph Verney*

"Dear Bror.,—On Wednesday last we came to this place in a full body, viz. Her Honour, and Her Niece, Cousen Lloyd, Miss Lovett and myself, with other Necessary Attendance; we lay at Northampton, the roads were extremely bad, but from thence much better. We had no ill accident but got safe to our Journey's end about noon. We left His Honour at home designing to sett out the next day, but whether to London or Wasing he kept as a very great secret from us. Sometime next week we are likely to be happy in Mr. Tigh, some of us at least, and that is Enough, for 'tis not possible one thing should please us all, our fancies and Inclination are too different, but the game goes on as you left it, with many additional improvements, wherein I shall be more particular as I have opportunity of seeing you. We had hopes of Capt. Lloyd this Christmas but now he has sent us word he finds it more advisable not to leave the Town till his business is finished. . . . Wishing a merry Christmas and many happy yeares may

attend your dwelling, with a Kiss to the little Rogues I am my  
Deare Brother's most affectionate Sister, E. VERNEY."

*Lady Cave to Lord Fermanagh*

26 Dec.  
1714.

"Honrd. Sir,—I was very glad to hear from Your Self that your constitution is still able to bear such journeyings tho' I wish it was not too great a force upon it, & that might be the foundation of your late confinement and cold, which I wish to hear has left you; Sir Geff. came here with Sir Thos. a Thursday night last, after having been a circuit together for ten Days and mightily fatigued with it, tho' they were highly entertain'd by many Gentlemen &c. of worth, but I believe it cost 'em full deer to, & we hope all the Artifices of the other party, won't be able to disappoint 'em, tho' their adversary so proudly as well as falsly boasts of his Numbers & threats & promises from many great Courtiers used to force & induce the country for him. I see Mr. Butterfield's loss in the news that I fear will be hard for him to find agen. We have now a full family of Children & all well, & with ther parents offer their Dutys to you & My Mother, Services to your selfe & merry Xmas. to all, from yours obediently, M. CAVE."

When the end of the year came, some one remembered the old Queen, and these lines were sent to Lord Fermanagh and kept among his papers:

Farewell Old Year, for thou canst ne'er return,  
No more than Our Great Queen for whom we mourn.  
Farewell Old Year, for thou to us did'st bring  
Strange changes in our State, a stranger King.  
Farewell Old Year, the Church has lost indeed  
The best Defender that she e're will see.  
Farewell Old Year, for thou with Broomstick hard  
Hast drove poor Tory from St. James's Yard.  
Farewell Old Year, Old Monarch, and Old Tory.  
Farewell Old England, thou hast lost thy Glory.

But on the whole there is only the usual worship of the Rising Sun; Mary Lovett writes to her brother:

"Pray tell your Ladies I have made my appearance at Court & had Collonel Oughton for my humble attendant most of the time I was there, I did design myself the honour of being presented to all the Blood Royal, but it being a Peticuler day the Crowd was soe great they perswaded me to defer it till the next time I came, which I promised the Collonell should be soon. I picked up severall sparks of my acquaintance amonst the rest Esqr. Tufnell, with his careless Air vouchsafed to attack me, I put on so much in-

20 Jan.  
1715.



difference as he had, and soe for a little time we held conversation. . . . I like the King mightily, and pray tell Mistress Pascoll he has A great deal of goodness to be seen in his face, I was within a Yard of him for 3 Hours together, the Princess is really a Good Fine Woman, and seems agreeable, her Breasts they make such a wonder at I don't think exceed Mrs. Abell's in size."

The new year opens with a testimony to the growing popularity of Caroline, Princess of Wales, although it is rumoured that the King looks upon her with extreme disfavour, and that the Court circle is by no means a united one.

1 Jan.  
1715.

*Margaret Adams to Lord Fermanagh*

" . . . The weather is set in extreme sharp, and 'tis scarce possible to keep my Mother warm by the fire side. I hope the Princess & the Masquaraders, which I hear are to be at Somerset House tonight, will keep warm with dancing, for Doubtless it is the fittest season for the diversion, and sure the Ladys will be pleased with one who promotes all kind of mirth and entertainments."

1 Jan.  
1715.

*Lord Fermanagh, from Claydon, to Ralph Verney*

" . . . John Inns, who is the crossdest ill-natured Carryer alive, left the hamper at London, tho' Smith told him what was in it, and that 'twould be spoiled if not brought downe, and here he told my wife his wagon was gone 3 Howers before Smithe brought it, which was a horrid lye. However after all, thanks to frosty weather, it came very well, I hear it is a noble Collar and do give you both abundance of thanks for it. I heartily wish you and all yours a happy and prosperous New Year, and desire you to give my humble service to all your good company. . . . Bumham the highwayman was buried in a Ditch by his Comrades; and Footman, another of our Country Roages, we hear is in Newgate, where is (it is said) Smith of Nor'Marston . . . our wayes are so full of snow that there is no goeing to see our neighbours nor they to come to us, which makes us lonely this Christmas, but that Mobb comes in. Parson Green's son (who is in Orders) is lately married to one Chapman, neither of 'em have anything but his Imployment, is now a Horse Courser, he was a Schoolmaster."

Writing about his Christmas Party:

4 Jan.  
1715.

" . . . I went down to see our Guests for a while who were Dodder-shall, Winslow, Adington, Adstock, & Thornborough &c. . . Young Kit Lovett will be at Stanford & in his return will call at this place; Captain Lloyd and his wife went thither last weeke. . . Last Sunday

night at 7 o'clock Mrs. Abell died, for which that family is full of sorrow. Her Son & Daughter will both miss her very much. Nellie Denton and the Boates are all at their sister Chamberlain's. Give my service to all of your Table to whom I wish many happy yeares."

"Some think of a Warr, Lord Stairs being like to return without an Audience of the Fr. King, and that Marlborough will goe to Vienna to prevaile with the Empr. to make a new Alliance with Engld., to which at present he is very averse. 6 Mar. 1715.

I am sorry all your lettles ones have coughs, but it hath been long a sickly time, God grant them all their healths again; both my wife and I are better tho' neither of us perfectly well, we expected Dr. Fruin but believe the rainy weather prevented him. I doe not yet stirr out.

Yesterday young Abell and his sister were here on a visit. My kind love to my Daughter and from all to all the rest."

*Margaret Adams to Lord Fermanagh*

5 Mar.  
1715.

"... We live in hopes of seeing your Ldsp. soon in town, because I'me told the Parliament will certainly sitt, an the time be fixt. I am very glad I could divert the Ladys by Song or anyway tho' indeed of late I have bin so ill that I could not divert myselfe so much as to Play at nine Cards with our old gang, but hope Lady F.'s illness is pretty well gon off since she could keep her Aunt's hours. I find Sir Taffy has been more remarkable this year than ever, and in the first place I most heartily wish Joy to your Claydon bride, which was not the only one, for Lord Wharton's son I think was that day married to Generall Holms's daughter, who Lady Wharton had been endeavouring to get in for Maid of Honr., and accordingly had chose her a Sute of Cloaths for the Birthday, in which she married; and the day after Lord Winchindon writt his father word of it, who immediately got the Ld. Chiefe Justice's Warrant and Solicitor Generall with him, together with some Constables, and found out where they lodged, and entered the room about 12 at night when the young Couple were in bed, upon which Lord Winchindon leapt out of bed in his Shirt and asked his Blessing. . . . His father then went to Generall Holms's house, where he strictly inquired who were aiding and assisting to the Stealing of his son, and found none that own'd anything of it but the Gentleman's son, a Boy whose answeres made him suspected to deliver letters, and one Gentleman, both which he sent to the Gatehouse; but the marriage apears Legall and I suppose will stand good. So the Lady has got a fine Gentleman as he well says; but from this story I must go to another of a different sort, which I mention because it happened also on the Welch Saint's

Day; and that is the buriall of Mrs. Cave's old friend Mrs. Worsley at St. James's Church, whither she was accompanied by Mrs. Cave, Mrs. Pallavasine, Mrs. Chettwin, and three more Virgins who held up the Pall. She left Mrs. Cave a Legacy of ten Guineys to buy a ring; and the greatest part of her Plate together with a dosen of China Plates; and the rest she gave among her relations, only to her Servt. who had long lived with her she gave the house she lived in [which is but a lease], ready furnished. Captain Lloyd and his wife came also to town on that day from Stanford."

It could not bring happiness to any woman to be allied to the Whartons, as the Verneys knew well. The irate father died the following month; Martha Holmes lost her only child, Thomas, in infancy. An allusion to her forlorn condition two years later occurs in a letter of Mrs. Vickers' (Feb. 8, 1717), and Lord Winchindon's after-career as Marquis and Duke of Wharton was one of the notorious scandals and tragedies of the century.

31 Mar.  
1715.

*Sir Thomas Cave, at Westminster, to Lord Fermanagh, at Claydon*

"... On Saturday there was a great show of fine red Coates and Pensioners at Court, but none of the Honest Party there. Steel made that day great entertainment of £200 cost or more, for his obdurate friends, there was little joy showed elsewhere. On Sunday great illuminations were made and tis said that in the City a great Generall's Effigies and Old Cromwell's were burnt. Our Guards are new cloth'd, but so pitiably that last night above a hundred of Em burnt their shirts, which they could not Sell for a pot of Ale apiece; some say Ld. Cl. is gon off for Stabbing a poor Man the other night."

6 June  
1715.

*Ralph Palmer to Ralph Verney*

"... Yesterday I was at a Review of the Horse Guards and Horse Grenadiers in Hide Park, the King, Prince, and D. of M., D. of Somt. &c. were all on horseback there for above an hour, he return'd to dine at St. James's, and went afterwards to Hampton Court, today he goes to the Horse Race at Guilford and Dines with Sir Richard Onslow."

In reading the correspondence of these gentry of the Midland Counties, we find that their interests extend from Oxford to Westminster, and include Essex and Hampshire, but their ignorance is complete as to the rest of Great Britain. Ireland is suspected and distrusted, Wales is a remote country where one may be lost



to importunate creditors, but the North of England and Scotland seem quite unknown.

In striking contrast to this home ignorance, the long wars had made them study the map of Europe; their sons and brothers had marched from the Scheldt to the Danube, and were familiar with the shores of the Mediterranean, with Cadiz and Vigo, and even with some of the Baltic Ports. They had failed to grasp the significance of the one great Act of Queen Anne's Reign, the Union which constituted Great Britain; and so when the ill-planned rebellion in Scotland was started in September 1715, the new dynasty had to face its first danger. It was a very grave one, but it was scarcely alluded to in the Verney letters, and it was over by the next spring.

Very little sympathy is felt for those who have fought for the Pretender. Mr. Tufnell writes:

"Yesterday the Rebels past by our House to their prisons. Lords, 10 Dec.  
Gentlemen, Servants of the Hilanders in their Plads, made a very 1715.  
poor despicable Figure, there was no distinguishing one from the other, they did not seem to have anything of a Military Air belonging to them."

The Treaty of Guarantees, concluded with the Dutch in January 1713, stipulated that if the Hanoverian succession was in jeopardy they should send over 6000 Dutch troops to our assistance. This was faithfully carried out. The first contingent of 3000 men was brought over by General Cadogan, who had been last seen in Marlborough's coach when King George entered London, and was one of our ablest Generals.

On November 13, 1715, Lord Fermanagh writes to Ralph Verney:

"The Horse I had for the Militia is dead this week. . . ."

All through that winter and spring, Dutch and English soldiers, on their way north, were about in the villages; already in November Lord Fermanagh wrote:

"There came abt. 600 Dutch Soldiers to Winsloe from Barkham- 27 Nov.  
stead with 14 Carriages of Women and other Baggage and one 1715.  
Caesh, yesterday they went on to Tocester, but at night another Regimt. of Em came to Winslow."

15 Dec.  
1715.

*Lord Fermanagh to Ralph Verney*

"... The Dutch Soldiers [who were ill shod for a long march] woud not keep the Road, but Cutt or pulled up the Hedges at Sand Hill to go over the pasture, but I ordered Em to be stopt up again."

21 Dec.  
1715.

*Lady Cave to Lord Fermanagh*

"... We had many of the Dutch pass near us, and to our cost too, tho' Hedges we need not fear had they gone thro' Em, but a waggon we did fined them and Warrants, Sir Tho. sent out four, twelve, and fourteen a day, a week together, but I hope this will be the last of that trouble."

Dec.  
1715.

*Sir Thomas Cave to Lord Fermanagh*

"... We have had great bustling with hauling out our Militia, and Ime sure my good Affections were Singularly distinguished, for my horses and Accoutrements were noted to be the best in the Troop, tho' I had great partiality showed to me for to ease our modern noblemen and others. I was compell'd to furnish an horse extraordinary, and They one or two less, God forgive their Malice and prevent any Ill Consequence of it to me, the Militia of Bucks has been out too, but the whole County I hear are Cowards, for the Men are unwilling to go, whereas I have two or three ready for every horse, and could have had in a weeks time for the service of His Majesty."

Dec.  
1715

"... I wish this has better luck than most of my letters which are generally opened, I can't imagine for what reason, except they'd know how many Wagons and other provisions I have ordered for the Conveyance of their High Mightynesses troops to Scotland *pr. Terram firmam*, which has occasioned an inexpressible murmuring in these Midland Counties, through the prodigious Expencc occasioned thereby. I have given out orders for 15 Carriages besides Saddle Horses per Diem for a week together; surely water carrying is as speedy and cheaper."

By the time the Dutch reached Scotland the crisis was practically over. The Pretender had got away by sea, leaving his unhappy followers to a cruel revenge. Lord Cadogan laid waste the whole country, from Stirling to Inverness; the Dutch, according to a Jacobite account, "left nothing earthly undestroyed". How little these severities served as a deterrent was shown by the way in which the Highlanders rallied to the young Pretender in the much more serious rising 30 years later. "Waverley" was shown by the

Baron of Bradwardine, an old Scottish house, his mother's home, "burnt by the Dutch auxiliaries brought in by the Government in 1715".

*Daniel Baker, at Penn, to Lord Fermanagh*

24 Dec.  
1715.

"My Lord,—I received your answer concerning the Armes, I have since returned the contents of our letter to the Earl of Bridgwater. . . . I dare say it is not out of disrespect or any apprehension of your Lordship that they are demanded, for you have too good an Estate, and are too much a Protestant and Lover of the Country, than to Embarque in any such wicked design, as to bring in the Pretender, which consequently must be to bring in Popery and Slavery with him, for they must attend him, and therefore I am the more surprized at this time to find any English gentleman for him, but shortly I believe they will have their reward for their Pains, and I think they deserve it, both on the publick and Private account, for I dare say their Rebellion has cost them two millions, and I am greatly afraid our Estates must help for to pay Em."

*Sir Thomas Cave to Lord Fermanagh*

2 Jan.  
1716.

" . . . I wonder the Hogens [Dutch] serv'd You so ill in the pastures, your Roads being always as full of holes as they could make your Hedges, that tis plain they did not want hollows but to keep in use the pioneer faculty; I believe they were ill enough shodd, but they stole shoes at Lutterworth, and loaded themselves with pidgeons. Our parts were very Civill to Em, and study'd to lodge Em where they might be Wellcome, billeting sometimes 12 at a time in the House of a good presbyterian, and if the Prestoneers had been mounted on my Steeds, Lumley's troopers would not have seen their faces, therefore no warrant was directed to me to furnish out any horses. I had indeed trouble enough in writing the orders for the Hogens' passage, but my clerk thanks me, I suppose Busby eased Mr. Challoner of that trouble."

*John Baker to Lord Fermanagh*

7 Jan.  
1716.

"This comes to return your Lordship thanks for your kind invitation to Claydon. I should certainly have paid my respects to your Lordship had I not heard that the roads were almost impassable. . . . The Lord Oxford will be speedily brought to his tryall, the Lord Lansdown was to have been tried but for reasons of State unknown to the publick his tryall was put off. We have a current report here that the Pretender is landed in Scotland, and that the E. of Sutherland is beaten. Stocks are falling upon this report, the Streets are so very bad in London especially about Stocks Markett, and just before our doore, that we have severall Coaches over-



turned every day, and severall full of ladies! by which means we have an opportunity of helping them out and seeing the Coulour their stockings are of. We all have passed the Thames from Westminster to Lambeth on foot, it is soe cold that I can scarce hold my Pen."

Francis Luttrell writes from Chelsea to acquaint Lord Fermanagh with the loss of their old friend and neighbour, Mr. Palmer. He regrets that Lady Fermanagh

2 Feb.  
1716.

"doth not injoy such good health as we could wish. . . . We have but little share of it here, for my Mother's cough is pretty violent at nights, my Father consulted Dr. Sloane yesterday upon a Swelling in his Leggs and a pain in his side. Tho' the Civil Constitution of the Two Families is in Peace and Good Harmony, yet in the Habit of the Bodies of some few of our Best Friends we are a little distempered, which at the approach of Spring, I hope will be rectified and by that time probably there may be an end of the War in Scotland, Tho' not of the Aid of four shillings in the pound, for it is not doubted but that there may be a general Engagement in a few days. If your Lordship was in town you'd hear all the little Rumours now stirring, but I find Mr. Denton's quolity hath exempted you from the Number of 16 Persons ordered to attend Service of the House on that day 3 weeks. I hear that Learned Councillor is entering upon a marriage state, with Coll. Bond's sole daughter and heir . . . she is in Common Fame valued at £20,000, but all is not true which is reported."

The tragedy of Jacobite fidelity was only brought home to the ordinary Londoner when Walpole sternly refused all prayers and bribes, and the Earl of Derwentwater and Lord Kenmuir perished on the scaffold.

We have two accounts written to Lord Fermanagh on the same day, in one of which Francis Luttrell has confused the conduct of the two men; Lord Derwentwater, who to the last moment was expecting a reprieve, was the one to pause, and not Lord Kenmuir, whose political principles were more deeply involved.

25 Feb.  
1716.

*Francis Luttrell to Lord Fermanagh*

". . . Yesterday the sentence was executed on Tower Hill upon the Bodies of the late Earl of Derwentwater and Ld. Viscount Kenmuir. I am told, the former of them did not apprehend the time of the dissolution to be fully come, for he had not the Coffin provided for him till the morning of that day on which he suffered, and then was he necessitated to be conveyed from off the

Scaffold in one which was bought ready made. The Executioner severed their heads at one Blow. The Earl laid down at once, but the Visct. made 2 or 3 pauses. The Earl of Nithsdale was designed to have had his Share of Suffering on the Same Day, but got out and made his Escape in A Riding Hood alone on the night before, as is reported, by water. The other 3 under Sentence are to Suffer on Wendsday, 7 march ensuing. I hear 3 Wardens are in Limbo about the Escape of that Condemned Lord.

Some say the D. of Nottingham is to be then removed, I hope not, for I believe he loves old England in Opposition to Popery and Slavery, Presbytery and Knavery. All this Family are at the humble Service of your Self and Friends, but he is more especially, who can in the health and vigour of his Age, and in the Sincerity of his thoughts, declare it under his own hand, as doth Your most Obliged Humble Servant,

FRA. LUTTRELL."

*Jack Baker to Lord Fermanagh*

25 Feb.  
1716.

"My Lord,—I have inclosed sent your Lordship Lord Derwent-water's speach—I had the curiosity to goe to see him dye, but the Sight was very terrible. He was dressed in black velvet, Jack Ketch had his clothes and two Guineys for doing his Office. He expected a Reprieve on the Scaffold, and was very unwilling to dye. Lord Kenmuir was dressed in a brown Coat, and behaved himself like a Hero; he was very cool and Sedate and met Death with a great deal of Courage, the Sheriff asked him if he had anything to say, he answered he came to dye and not to make Speaches. Tis said his son was on the scaffold at the same time. The Block was about six inches high, with a hollowed place for his chin to come into that his neck might lye firme, so that they lay flat on their Bellies and could not see the stroke when it came. The Lord Kenmuir gave the executioner eight Guineys, several people cryed, and others were as much rejoiced."

*Daniel Baker to Lord Fermanagh*

28 Feb.  
1716.

". . . We had a report yesterday that my Lord Nithsdale was retaken, but tis contradicted again. . . . I am sorry your Carryer goes out so early on a Wednesday which is a Fish day, not knowing but such a thing might be welcome to your Lordship and easy for Digestion, I would have sent you some, but Tuesday is the worst day in the week so could not meet with what I desired. . . . I have sent your Lordship an Orange and Lemmon or two, and I hope they are good."

". . . I wish you a continuance of the health to which this good weather will contribute as well as to the Relief of the Ladyes from

6 Mar.  
1716.

their long confinement, I wish you joy of your new Neighbour and Kinswoman, who was carried off from our Quarters the latter end of last week, and whose Trophys were worn in great Plenty by the Templers.

I send your Lordship an acct. of Gen. Foster's campaign. . . . The Lords are reprieved a fortnight longer, upon expectation of an ingenuous and open Confession of the Mystery of Iniquity, the last Reparation they can make to their injured Country for the mischifs they have brought upon her.

Ld. Compton married a considerable Fortune on Saturday, with which the family are very much pleased. Mr. Ch. Leigh is about marrying the Lady Barbara Lumley.

I was last week at Mrs. Adams', but did not expect to see anyone there, for when I came in at the Doore, the house seemed to be near demolisht, and is in as bad a plight as the Burgoss Cathedral, on a time, however, when I Had scaled the Encumbrances on the Staires, I had the satisfaction to find the Company I wanted, Mrs. Lovett, Sir T. Cave, instead of Bricklayers and Carpenters, who were the most probable tenants at that time.

Abundance of people in the streets have been gazeing at strange Phenomena in the skies, which I have not time to relate."

31 Mar.  
1716.

*Sir Thomas Cave to Lord Fermanagh*

"I confess the County of Bucks is very subject to Meteors, which proceed from the Vaporious Exhalations of the Deep soil, but then they're so condens'd that theyre Lumination is nowhere apparent but in its own special Climate. . . . At the Assize at Leicester I got both Anger and Aspersions from Sir Littleton Powis, because I refused to find a Bill when I had not 12 Men of the Opinion of finding it, and Severely incenst was he at Me particularly, tho' I never voted to it, as I saw there was not a sufficient Jury for it. He discharged me some hours at asking, before my Brethren, which I took for a favour, but he construed it otherwise, for he told the Court he was glad he had dismissed me for he thought me and all my followers to be disaffected to the Gouvernement for ascertaining the Right of Private Men; he affirmed that if we did not find the Inditement, he would have another Jury to tell it, twas maliciously brought in against me for drinking the Pretender's health. Byrd on Tuesday last went with Dixwell [Sir Thomas Cave's brother-in-law] in his Coach to Warwick Assizes, and my Sheriff's men equipt without exception, I hope hele use Em kindly, or Ile send no more. . . . I find by the Resolutions of the Hon. House you and I must soon meet in Stephen's asembly in lieu of Dunstable, indeed I fear Griepewald's clutches or Ide still injoy this sweet Northern Air."



*Jack Baker to Lord Fermanagh*29 Mar.  
1716.

"... The Greatest talk at present is the report that the Parliament is going to Suspend the Triennial Bill. if this be true it will give a general dislike to all. but I hope this is only a false report. Two Sergeants of the Guards fought, one was killed on the spot and the other much wounded so that he cannot live. I was this week along with one of my Clerke men, to see some of the State Prisoners, they are A Parcell of merry dogs, tho' severall say they shall be hanged. They play at Cards and drinke honest Porte, and put the Evill Day far from them. They do not much care to give talk of Preston, and curse the Generalls for not letting them fight, which if they had done, they seem pretty sure they should have beat Wills."

*Lady Cave to Lord Fermanagh*9 Mar.  
1716.

"I am now once more left by myself, Sir Thomas having taken his flight upwards again, to choosing rather to take an Unnecessary, than hazard a forced journey, which would be more disagreeable. . . . Upon this Summons . . . I hope tis neither Gout nor any other indisposition that now detains you. The day Sir Tho. went Sir John Danvers and Mr. Egerton came here and favoured me with their companies till this day, that they are returned homewards agen, which is no grieve to me."

Sir Thomas Cave earnestly desires Lord Fermanagh to be in his place if possible:

"To prevent the impending danger of a Bill which must wound 1716.  
a great part of the Constitution . . . if it goes currently through the Upper House I fear little Stop can be put to it in the other, but sometimes an unexpected success attends on most unlikely appearances. I have daily questions of your coming up, indeed all our Friends wish for every single member. . . . About 4 yesterday morning Mr. Foster made an Elopemt. from his Keeper in Newgate, and is got off to the Surprise of all, we can hear no account of by what means he escap't, everyone conjectures to his Fansey. A Proclamation of £1000 was this morning Issued for apprehending him, which is more than he merits. . . . Lady Sunderland is dying by having an Artery cutt in bleeding, we might better have spared him."

Thomas Forster was a Northumbrian Squire, with strong Jacobite sympathies. He joined the army of the Old Pretender in October 1715, and owing to his social position was given an important command. Not being a trained soldier he lost heart and surrendered

at Preston. He was sent to be tried in London with the Peers who were afterwards executed. He would have shared their fate but that he escaped from Newgate on April 10, 1716, and got over to France. He died at Boulogne in 1738.

24 Apr.  
1716.

*Daniel Baker to Lord Fermanagh*

"I am sorry to hear of the Inconvenience which attended your Lordship's going out to take the Aire, and that you were confined to your Chamber, being in hopes I might have waited on you in this Place at this Time. And since every member's presence is required this day, The House has been sweating and squeezing ever since the morning, on the Triennial Bill, and are like to be so till midnight. I would Have thrust myself in, but the Order prevented Me and many more, who had regard to Mr. Sergt. at Arms' Authority. The Bill will pass the Commons, but not by a great majority, many think it a sort of Usurpation for them to enlarge their own Power and prolong their Term of sitting, without any Regard to their Electors from whom alone their Power is deriv'd, but at this Rate They wont stand in need of Them—And your Lordship need not pave your Burgh of Amersham this 5 years.

The Politicians which were excluded from hearing the Publick Debates at Westmr. repared to the Circus at Marybone (Hockley in the Hole being out of Date) to see the Roman Sports of Gladiators, Boxers &c, besids the Baiting a monstrous Leopard, Native of Africa, with Bears, Bulls, and other Brute Beasts. The softer sex which shrinks off at Blood that is not spilt in Beauty's Cause, are now shining in the Boxes at Drury, to know the mystery of the Title (She would if She could) and see the Vexation of Disappointed Desire. Others intend to grace the Drawing-Room, and Sooth the Heroes that are returned with glorious Scars from Preston and Dunblain, where tis not impossible but your Humble Servt. may be, with a Lady nearly related to your Lordship. I thank your Lordship for your account of the Buckinghamshire Bride, and your good wishes to me, which I cant guess when they will take effect as my circumstance is."

All through the summer of 1716 there were bodies of undisciplined and ragged soldiers making for their homes—received at first as Heroes and Deliverers, but tiring out the hospitality of the towns and villages they went through.

Lady Cave writes to her father of the

16 Apr.  
1716.

"Great Bussle herabouts with providing for the conveyance and entertainment of our trusty friends, in their return from the Great and Meritorious Services lately done us. . . . Their way being not

by us, your Poultry I doubt not found no quarter, their Brave Stomacks being hardly satiated before they reached you, tho' well fed. The Officers Mr. Byrd entertained at dinner last Thursday and I hear gave a very free character of Lutterworth and I fansey would not spare his other Neighbours, soe that tis well the town is left whole, tho they have sustained a vast loss; their halt being there last week at the Fair Time they dispersed some hundreds in the near villages, and our poor Swinford had sixty who they gave free quarters to, but notwithstanding that Ease, Lutterworth is some hundred pounds the worse for their company, and is in expectation of more of their favours, others being looked for today mongst them. Sir Thomas is there now at a meeting of the Justices."

Mr. Vickers writes:

"... The Princess a Wednesday night supt at the Lord Rochester's, who was mightily pleased with the Lord Hyde, and told the Child he should be Groom of the Stole to her Son when he came over, she played at Cards till eleven. . . . My Bootes pinch me, I wish I had my Shoos." 27 Sept.  
1716.

*Jack Baker to Lord Fermanagh*

"... All the News here is about the young Lord Wharton having changed those principles, which the late Earl took so much care early to instill in him. When he 1st. went over he insulted all the ministers at the Hague, whose masters were Suspected to be in the Pretender's Interest. He continued firm till he came to Paris, where being in the Company of the late Lord Bullingbrock, he told him he was intirely in his interest; that Lord smiled and told him his Interest was nothing new, and was so honest as to advise him not to alter his principles, and withal told him that he repented from the bottom of his heart what he had done—but Says he my Lord, I had a great deal of reason for what I did; for what I did was to obey my Mistress's commands and to raise my fortune—but your Lordship says he, can have no such view now for it is now too late. He wrote to Severall of the Young Lords friends to acquaint them with it; at the same time he wrote to the Lord Treasurer(?) to take upon him to be his Guardian in the room of Mr. Leachmere, however I hear that my Lord's Steward here has recd. a letter from him wherein he denies all this, but noone creditts this letter. 15 Nov.  
1716.

The second Regiment of the Sco. Regiment of Guards exercised yesterday in High Park, the Prince layed five hundred pounds with General Tatton that the Sco. Regiment performed best but lost, the Wager was decided by the Gen. officer in Town. . . . Your Lordship's nephew and Servt.

JOHN BAKER."



28 Nov.  
1716.

*Ralph Palmer to Lord F.*

"... I have sold my Chambers in the Temple to one Mr. Samuel Gill a Member of Parliament for Litchfield, for 300 Guineas, after having enjoyed them 28 years. One motive was I was pretty near being called to the Bench, which if I had find for would have been £50 and if I had accepted would have cost me 200 down."

*Lady Cave, from Stanford, to Lord Fermanagh*

"... Sister Lovett is in daily expectation of a summons to town. . . . You did Verney a great Honour in remembering his Birthday, and many of our neighbours paid him the compliment in Various Entertainments, Card Playing, the Bottle, etc., till supper time, about 12, after that having a Trumpett, harp and Violinn we had a set of 8 Couples that turned out Dancing till broad Day and then Sheer'd off; others that stuck by the glass till 4 that afternoon; so that I may say few went off so sound in their limbs as they came, and I fancy some of the Guests would find a lightness in their pocketts if not in their heads before they'de quitt the place of entertainment and Mirth; I expected blindness after such a Revell but thank God I don't find it. Our Rugbeians return to their Quarters at that place tomorrow, they with Rest of the Flock desire their Dutys may be made acceptable to your Lordship and my Lady."

The danger was over for the time, although discontent went on smouldering, which a cleverer man than the Chevalier might have utilized. The Jacobites consoled themselves with bad jokes and scurrilous songs:

William & Mary, George & Anne,  
Four such children never had man,  
They turned their Father out of doors,  
And hunted and harried his son from their shores.

## CHAPTER XXII

### LORD FERMANAGH'S LAST YEARS

LORD FERMANAGH'S old age was certainly a happy one; he retained his faculties and his good judgement to the last, it was only his physical health that troubled him and this varied wonderfully, according to the person who inquired after him. When it was reported that he was much too infirm to stand an election for the county, he indignantly appealed to a friend to contradict so malicious a report—he felt better than he had done for years. But when it was put before him that he failed entirely to do his duty by attending the Irish House of Lords, he brought forward four incurable diseases which would entirely prevent his crossing the Channel to Dublin, to his extreme regret.

He attended at Westminster when he could, and when he was unable to leave Claydon there were several relations to send him the latest news, whether of the Austro-Turkish War or with the change that came nearer home in the proposal to turn a Triennial Parliament into a Septennial one.

*John Baker to Lord F., from London*

10 Aug.  
1716.

“ . . . Here came yesterday a glorious piece of news, if it holds true, that Prince Eugene had entirely defeated the Turks, and has killed fifty thousand on the spott.” [A list accompanies this letter of the officers engaged and the booty taken from the Turks, with a note that Major-General Count Breuner in chains was beheaded in the Grand Vizier's tent. Colonel Forster's name is amongst the killed, 4th & 5th of August.] “ . . . The publick prints have little reading, therefore are obliged to insert Lies and the glorious achievements of the heroes at the Mug Houses. The Master of one of them has already received £200 from the Government for damages sustained by the mobb, and another is ordered to give an account what Damages he has had and he will be recompensed; there has been a Guard to preserve one of them constantly of about

three score men for a month past of a Trained Band. . . . The Prince and Princess dine Publickly every day at Hampton Court, which ingratiates them very much with the people; the Guards are in Camped before the Palace Gate, there is about 12 Tents. I suppose you have my three daughters with you yet, who I am sure are very much obliged to you. The Pretender has sent over a new Declaration wherein he says he is coming again, with a very considerable force, and he hopes that all his good subjects will take up Armes for him, to deliver themselves from Tiranny and Slavery (and Protestantism); he has exceptid 20 out of the General Pardon."

Lord Fermanagh would have voted against the Septennial Bill, and regretted his inability to attend the House, "when the Suspension of a good Law is in question, that I might openly show how much I am for preserving our well-made Statutes".

Future experience was to show that this change in "our well-made statutes" was so beneficial that it lasted for more than two centuries, in spite of the prognostications of evil by these excellent and experienced men.

26 Apr.  
1716.

*Sir T. Cave to Lord Fermanagh*

" . . . We lost our point, in the end with a Larg Majority, which shows us all in the wrong, and on Tuesday last wee read the Bill a second time, which kept us very late by the Long Debates from 11 to 8 at night, during which case I sat fasting, and on our Division were for the Bill 284, to 162 agt. it, and at our Committee yesterday upon it the fate was near the same. The like too we expect this day on the 3rd reading. I am glad you are so recovered as to think of coming up, but doubt my fortune in seeing you, intending soon to make my Exit from this place. Poor Mr. Vickers came to town yesterday about two, soe weak he could not goe upstairs without the help of two men, for which I am heartily sorry. His recovery being much questioned."

Lord Fermanagh's practical knowledge of our foreign commerce was probably unequalled in the House; he had not spent sixteen years in Aleppo without knowing something of the ways and the wiles of Turkish and Levantine traders.

When questions arose in the House of the grant of new charters, which threatened to endanger the profits of the older Companies, he was one of the few calculated to champion them and the West African Company, which had built forts all down the Nigerian Coast and had spent much that the new companies were trying to

confiscate. The Englishman's conscience was not yet awake to the iniquities of the Slave Trade; and the idea that Begums had rights or wrongs was not yet peeping over the political horizon. Speculation of all kinds at home was at fever-heat; every man or woman with a guinea to spare was anxious to put it into the State Lotteries. It was not till a few years after Lord Fermanagh's death that the South Sea Bubble burst so disastrously. The coinage had recently been reformed; the clipping of coin was strictly forbidden, though apparently still practised in Buckingham. (See June 23, 1700.)

Paper was gradually taking the place of the gold that a gentleman's footman was wont to carry large sums of, in a leathern bag, through narrow streets full of rogues and footpads.

The early years of the eighteenth century were especially important in London for changes in the currency, the safe keeping and the transport of money.

The Bank of England was started in 1694 and had many rivals in its early years. The goldsmiths had long received deposits of coin and had issued their own notes, as did several private joint-stock companies, who were becoming recognised as bankers. The Exchequer notes, which only lasted for a few years, were also inimical to the Bank of England.

Besides the home problems, there were all the complications of foreign trade and the rates of exchange of foreign money; these questions are only mentioned here because they occupied much of Lord Verney's last years, and influenced the votes he gave in the House of Commons. Speculation, public and private, was rife everywhere, but he died before the great crash of the South Sea Company taught some, at least, of the investors the risks involved in the promise of high interest. Lord Fermanagh's own private affairs were in safe and friendly hands. The Hoares were amongst the goldsmiths who had become bankers, and the name of Hoare and their sign of the Golden Bottle hanging out in Fleet Street still point out to the passer-by one of the few private joint-stock banks that has survived on its original site to the present day. Mr. Henry Hoare's congratulations on his election success were amongst the most welcome that he received, especially as the letter announced that his father, Sir Richard, recently knighted by Queen Anne, was to be his colleague in Parliament, in 1710, after some previous defeats in which they had both shared.



We know that the accounts of this Bank, opened before 1673, were carried on in as detailed and accurate a form as a bank account would be to-day. Sir John Verney, in a passing letter, wondered how his account at Messrs. Hoare's Bank stood in 1702-1703. A request from Mr. Henry Higgs (who was at the time Lecturer in Economics at the University of North Wales) brought an immediate answer from the Bank of all sums received and paid on Lord Fermanagh's account in those years, the total amounting to £1881 10s. 4d.

16 Jan.  
1716.

*Catherine Verney to her Husband*

"... My Father has had a very unlucky accident with his hors. The Tall hors was taken up to fetch water on Monday at noon, and he run squeaking about as he used to doe. Yesterday morning they missed him out of the Warren, and the old man, in the most sad takeing, sent presently all here abouts, but no tidings. . . . But last night Robin Brown fetching the Cows found the Hors lyeing dead exactly in the very place where poor Special dyed; they can't see that anything aled him."

24 Jan.  
1716.

*Lord Fermanagh to Ralph Verney*

"... I have not writt to you because I have been ill these twelve or fifteen days past for which I have kept in my Chamber and drinck horse-dung posset daily. . . . I am not able to goe to the Parliament and God knows when I shall."

11 Feb.  
1716.

*Lord F. at Claydon to Ralph Verney*

"... Mr. Butterfield has been ill but is now pretty well again, but Mr. Benet the Vicar of Penn dyed suddenly on his birthday aged 51. He went well to bed and in an hower call'd his maid for he thought he was dyeing, and soe Expir'd before she coud get to him. Mr. Disney the Parson of Bletchley went on Sunday morning (as he used to do on Sundays) into his Closet and his folks hearing somewhat fall, ran up and found him dead; it's a very good living in Mr. [Browne] Willis's Guift. I hear Mr. Fra. Duncombe, Mr. Crosse, Dr. Wood, Mr. Lane, and some others are left out of the Commn. as Justices. Your tenants Stevens and William Hinton have brought their Rents, which is all and the best news I Have to send you."

21 Feb.  
1716.

"... Yesterday Sir Thomas Cave came hither in his way to London and tells me he left all well at Stanford and Rugby; the same day your tenant Wm. Roades brought your Rent but presseth

much for an other doore to his Calfes House, and saith he is fain to carry one of the doores of his house thether. The place mended in W. Roades' Ground was done with Pebbles and Wood and Gravel, but the shoot of water this late dreadfull season hath washed away the Pebbles, so that Its bad again and must be done with great Stones. . . . The pains in my side continue and my breth is very short for which I live allwayes above staires."

*Lady Cave to Lord F.*

19 Feb.  
1716.

" . . . I find Mr. Disney is succeeded by a neighbour of ours soe I Doubt our country will lose a very Good Man, Dr. Wells, and tis like that being the best he must reside there [Bletchley], though he should hold both vacancies for the time. I wish the other vacancies you mention and all of that town were filled with so worthy and true a Churchman as the Doctor is."

*Lady Cave to Lord Fermanagh*

30 Jan.  
1716.

" . . . The season has long made it unsociable in these parts . . . with sharp frosts and piercing Winds and with a floud that all most Drowns our Parish. We have all found the effect of the weather by extream bad colds, and Betty is a much greater sufferer, having the whole time crippled with Chillblains and Kibes, and now undergoes confinement to her bed for Em with poulticing and salveing being soe swelled and sore, and the other two females have had a little touch of Em. . . . We have once again been like to lose our Neighbour Sir Willm. Boughton, he falling into convulsions upon the news of the Death of his Eldest daughter unmarried, whom through some misunderstanding and disagreement in the fammily Sir Willm. had been wrought upon to cause her to live with her Sister Lady Houghton at Preston, and there received so great a fright that threw her in a feaver of which she died; He with the help of two or three Phisitians tis hop'd will rub through this affliction. Our whole fireside here join in greetings to you and my mother."

*Sir T. Cave to Lord F.*

11 Feb.  
1716.

" . . . I'me sorry to find that You are so afflicted with the Gout, this sharp weather must aggravate the pains, indeed I was oblig'd to a complaint of a settled Cold cross my Corpusculam, which with violence rendered Me incapable of a town journey, I therefore Certify'd it under my sign manuall, and came off this once with Flying Colours; Tis full time for me to expect some mercy from the W——, having yet had nothing but hatred and Malice. Tis probable I had been in town but for the dismall apprehensions of



a passing Newport or Aylesbury Cold Baths, which the Frosts may have now sufficient affected that I may think of moving soon, and hope to kiss your hand in transitu."

He hears that the floods are very bad at Claydon, and continues:

"If you please to erect a cold Bath cross Climing Lane, it may be more usefull in ditirring passengers from making any Entry out of which they can have no exit."

16 Apr.  
1716.

*Francis Luttrell to Lord F.*

"My Lord,— . . . Your Lordship's Letters are a Treasure of such a value to them upon whom you are pleased to bestow them that it would be outrageous Insolence to expect them oftener than your affable and condescending Temper is ready to dispense. . . . The swelling of my Father's leggs is much fallen, it went away without pain, and my Mother has begun to go abroad about 8 or 10 days and received no prejudice by it. . . . All the talk is about King George's going to Hannover to give the Northern Allies a meeting and about the Bill in the House of Lords for suspending the Triennial Act; it was brought in by the D. of Devonshire, seconded by the E. of Rockingham. . . . 'Tis generally believed it will be turned into a Bill for a Septennial Parliament; it is a pity our most benign tender and indulgent Prince should ever turn a drift Such a Dear good Dutifull Parliament. Before I take leave of your Lordship I return you my humble thanks for prompting me to bring my Consort to Claydon, and assuring me of a welcome; I am persuaded that whenever I shall have courage to put the Question to Mrs. Twoshoes, she will much more easily comply in hopes to be honoured with your friendship and Esteem, which will be a mark of such eminent dignity upon her Character that nothing can add so bright a Lustre to it."

In May 1716 Lord Fermanagh's health has at last permitted him to be in London. He is glad to be out of the way, for a terrible amount of whitewashing and spring-cleaning is going on at Claydon; the Whitsun Ales, which bring a nondescript crowd to the House, are in full swing; and ambitious projects which his wife entertains for cutting down trees close to the house and altering the long-cherished garden walks trouble him. She will do nothing without his approval and this is not always to be had.

20 May  
1716.

*Lady Fermanagh, at Claydon, to her Husband*

"I have bin very bisie in Whitewashing some parts of the House, and the Dirt and dabe is not quite over yet. I have got laid in 4s

Lode of fine Gravill for the Mount walk, and do design to git it done so neat that you shall not know Claydon—and I am about from morning till night a Long with the 2 boys, and will make them clean the back courtyards as we go to the Stables. I have but one request of you and that is to grant me leave to have the Fine firr trees at the end of the Mount taken down, because in the first place them few hinder the propspect, and doe litter the walk, that it is impossible to keep the walk clean. Mr. Challoner tells me you was inclined to have them down yourself—but I don't desire to fell anything without your order. The walk will be taken in a foot on a side narrower but cant be perceived; the reason is because all the ewes [yews] else will grow in the walk and the rowler will spoile 'Em. . . . Pray let me know your mind about the firrs at the end of the walke, if what I have don don't seem to please you I shall be much concern'd for that is my sincere desire. . . . Mr. Butterfield looks very ill and I fear in a declining way. . . . I can't call anything elce to mind at present, but wishing you well rid of your Gout, and a happy meeting to my Deare, your affectionate and Obedient Wife."

"My Deare,—I am sorry the Gout continues upon you still, you putting on of flannell I hope will be of use to you. . . . I did write to you a Long note of what was wanting in the House and yet could have made one Longer, but omitted what could be spared without in Conveniency. 22 May 1716.

We have whisen ayls [Whitsun ales] all about us, which brings such A Bundance of rabble & the worst sort of Company round us that I wish noe mischifes Happens. Old Oliffe alarmed all the town a Sunday night crying out Thieves, and all the neighbours went to his assistance upon his letting off 2 guns; his daughter was come home to him without clothes, he sent her back again for them, and tis thought some of the King's Companions did it to fright the old man. I can't help giving the Morris men monny when they come, for they tell me everybody doing it is the best way to send them going—there is one at Steeple Claydon, one at Hoggshaw, one at Buckingham and one att Stratten Audley. Here has bin a gathering for Littleton at Buckingham who has lost his Horse, and his father could not buy him a nother and he would have lost his place did he not gitt one, soe the Gentlemen all gave something; I said you was in town, and I did not know him, however I sent him a Crown.

I am sorry if Brother Luttrell's family shows any nittiness to the Bakers, it did not use to be soe, but I fancy there is not a right understanding among them. I can but be sorry for it as I am for a great many other things. . . . Mrs. Dormer's family goes up to town again, and she wonders att me to stay in the Country, and I tell her I wonder att her as much to Leave fresh Aire to goe up to the

Dusty town, she says that place was never finer than at this time. . . . Mr. White's house at Steeple Claydon had like to have fallen down and the workmen is to pull it down that part of it next week. They have no luck. . . . This minitt the House is full of one of the Morrisises."

Mary Lovett and little Bess are in London, and Lady Fermanagh writes to her husband:

25 May  
1716.

"I am extreemly concern'd that poor Miss Lovett's Swelling increases, and that her nose and Lipps did swell, I very much fear Mr. Vickers making a perfect cure of her—for these things are but bad simtoms attending a cure, I wish I may be mistaken with all my heart. As to the Mount Walk, there is nothing on to it as yet only the Gravill lyes ready when it is wanted, the Gardener designs to begin to turn up the Old Gravill this morning; to be sure there shall be nothing done that you order to the contrary. These whisen ayles brings abundance of people from all parts and a great many of the Substantial freeholders, that con't be denyed eating and drinking, but I thank God this week end all that trouble. Tom's sister and Brother and Sweetheart came, and the Keeper's two brothers, and Nan's two brothers, and the Rodes are so full of people that fivety will goe by the Mount at a time. I find you have bin at Chelsea again, I hope you met with better entertainment and found the Luttrells at home. Mrs. Sarah Butterfield is at Claydon to see her father and mother, and the young Man is att Home and gott a wigg, and looks well in it. Mrs. Verney sends her duty, they are sick of the Surry Jury and therefore have dismissed them to gitt one more for their purposes."

29 May  
1716.

". . . I sent you up a Pillow bear in the box, and a letter with fifty shillings in it. I wish them joy at Stanford, in their new doing the Great Parlor, it is a handsome rome, and I don't question but Lady Cave will be very exact in the furnishing part, the littell which she does at a time. We have had great thunderings and Lighting and a vast storm of Hale."

26 May  
1716.

". . . I am glad Mr. Vickers had the Hare sweet, I find the Basin has given you a great deal of trouble, which I am sorry for, but when Monsr. Marshall has mended it it won't sarve for youse, so that the showy part signifies but Little. . . . All the Routs now as to the whitsun ayles is over, it has cost 2 and a half Guineas and half a Crown in all, and yet I gave as Little as anybody. Mr. Butterfield has his fainting fits again. . . . The House Mrs. Starkey lives in is ready to tumble, and they have workmen about it, and she desires you will please to let her have a thousand of bricks to do the chimneys with, and she will pay Mr. Challoner 20 shellings



for them. I desire your answer by the next post because she wants the bricks very much."

*Ralph Palmer to Ralph Verney*

[Not at all pleased with the post of housekeeper while his wife is laid up.]

"I recd. your kind congratulations on the birth of my Son, whose Mamma and I return you many thanks for the kind office you so freely accepted. I bless God We here are in a very Hopefull way, this being my Wive's ninth day, and I hope she will be able to Mistress it in the family in a little time which wants it pretty much. I think there never were such Servants, I cannot meet with a footman that can keep himself sober above an hour in a morning, and the rest of them will receive no orders unless I speak to them myself, and must be spoke to doe every individual thing they know it their duty to doe. Pray Good Sir, give my most humble service to your Lady, Mrs. Pascoll, the fair Isabella, and the Cavalry, with a bundle of tender kisses to my Godson imprimis, and the rest of the Covey of your babes." 28 Aug. 1716.

*Sir Thomas Cave to Ralph Verney*

". . . I have waited some time to answer your last, that I might in it thank you for the five hounds, now I must let that alone till I have Em, perhaps you have better considered of the other, and think Em too currish to venture Em so farr. Or else some lawyeall Justice has clapt Em into Chelmsford Jayl, by taking them for Highland Rebels. Twill be kind on you to bail em for no doubt theyre as innocent as some that have been hang'd. I find there is to be a great Race at Brackley, this next September, of three days, and had I not bin preingaged should have tryed to bring the 100 Guineas. Tis about the time of your visiting Bucks, and I lay you by the heeles if you don't do me the honour to let me see you, And be sure to bring with you A Pocketfull of Grass, for wee have not so much here. I find you or your Spouse is to join in bail with me for the good behaviour of a young Palmer, tis a very hazardous point, for they're all unlucky knaves." 5 Aug. 1716.

We last week bury'd Dear Sir Wm. Boughton, and his Heir Sir Edward is on the break of Matrimony to one of Sir Robert Dashwood's Daughters . . . we all continue in perfect sanity of body but very weak-minded this hott weather, as you'l judg by this Scrawll, but I don't care."

". . . I did partake of but a moiety of your suggested Diversions, indeed that part of Household Furniture was soon over and looks 6 Aug. 1716.



extream handsome; I was only wanted at Coventry Ball, as you know I am in most places, where I'm absent. . . . I accompany'd poor Sir Willm. to the entrance of his Elysium, where I wished him a peaceable Repose. . . . I had the favour of a short visitt this day from Mr. Willis, whom I could not persuade to eat, or take a bedd with me, tho' We took the favourin of a glass of wine to wish your Lordship good health, with some more honest gentlemen of the Neighbourhood, he has been at Dr. Wells's near me. . . . My young Nonpareills flourish extreamly."

27 Aug.  
1716.

" . . . I heartily regrett your great loss by that malicious distemper, from which I have been long free, and since your loss has been so great I must think it pittty to robb you of the best in England tho' I really thought mine so, but not so madd. I wish you good luck with your new mare, and hope you took good sight to her knees, for horses have been very subject to make false Stepps, but you generally have better success as to price and goodness than most Cockney dealers. . . . Mr. Bromley has lately buried his eldest son by a former wife that now his present Lady's son comes fairly into the Estate."

19 Oct.  
1716.

*Sir Thomas Cave to Ralph Verney*

" . . . Your concern for the loss of Jewell can't equall mine for I had fixed Fansey on her, I cry'd her at many places and had given strict directions to the Carrier but can't yet hear of her. Your petition of Violet's usage shall be granted. I put em into Kennell under the notion of safety, which proved otherwise thro' some impairs of the Walls. . . . My son's Eyes are now pretty well, we hope soon to dismiss him to his Schoolastick residence, but my wife was taken with the same distemper in her Eyes but in a greater extream, she has bin blooded with Leeches and other applications, as yet to little effect. They are now excessive bad, which puts us all in rucks."

5 Dec.  
1716.

*Sir Thomas Cave to Lord F.*

" . . . I can as yet give your Lordship but a weak account of my wife's Eyes that she presumes not yet to read or write . . . poor Tommy also has the same distemper, he bears it courageously and tis wisht that Humour may not so long attend his young Roguish eye as it has many others. Miss Lovett too has a very bad one, and I hear sister Verney and her young ones at Baddow have the same complaint. . . . It seizes many after diferent ways, as in the Mouth, with a violent heat and soreness, others by a Corporeall sickness, in which last manner the young ladies at Newnham have been indisposed. I thank God as yett I have rubb'd on without Hipp or Feaver, thinking my auricular deficiensy too abundant, without

the abstraction of my Sight. . . . Our Rugbeians will come home for Xmas to morrow that between their diversions Lusory and Scholastick my time will be abridged. One of my antagonists Byrd's sisters is lately married to a great Tory of Leicester, at the first fame of which tis said he was dumbfounded for a long time, her fortune of £1500 being in his hands and now being soon likely to be Snatcht away, which he cant well spare, it has made him so silent that now we scarcely know we have a byrd in the County except Buzzards. . . . Sir Geff. Palmer has lately had a bad fall from his horse and so bruized that he is confined to his bed, that I wish I had not soon a new Partner."

*Ralph Palmer from Little Chelsea, to Ralph Verney*

4 Oct.  
1716.

" . . . I was tempted to go a-hunting the other day, thinking some exercise might do me good, and fasting all day and not returning till night I hapnd to eate some Pork and Peas, which made me so ill I thought I would never have seen you more. I am better than I was but am very much broken out about my lips.

I have been heartily vext too, about a very base action of both the Men Luttrells towards me. I was about renewing a lease of some ground to Mr. Cardonel, and they have several times been inquisitive about it. . . . If I were to tell all that they said of him, I should make fine work with them, but I scorned to tell what is sayd in private conversation on any account, Mr. Cardonel and I are agreed. . . . I have my next house in my hands and have come off pretty well without that, all the Locks, some brass, all good, are left to me, tho' I have a very weak Lease to trust to."

*Sir T. Cave to Ralph Verney*

5 Oct.  
1716.

" . . . We are very busy here making Interest for Verdurer's place, in lieu of Mr. Breton deceased. I am ingag'd for Mr. Stratford, against Mr. Cockain, Uncle to Lord Culleir, who is sett up by Ld. Hallifax, who indeavours to lead this County by the Nose, but I hope they'll fail in the attempt.

Sister Lovett and I greatly admire the Ink you wrote last with, never having seen such before, but dare not wish for the Recipe it being no doubt a Secrett.

Certainly Warwick must resent Lord Brook's absence, he having often promised them to reside there when married, and the Contrary must lose him a good Interest. I suppose you have made good havock among the Partridg by Setting, and tis likely I am not behind you; We are all, but Verney, very well, his Eyes are still foul and angry, which will retard his progress at school."

7 Oct.  
1716.

*Lord Fermanagh to Ralph Verney*

"... Lett Mrs. Verney know I have made some advances towards old Guy; a jury of old Maides is to be impannelled the next week to examin Guy P.'s promises, Cary Stewkley is to be the Chair woman, Mrs. Floyd must not faile of her attendance, she being one of the Committee. Your Aunt whom I saw last night is but 16, her daughter 79." [Mrs. Adams had just passed her 79th birthday, but was as lively as ever.]

18 Oct.  
1716.

"... In Exchange Alley you have a near Relation of yours getting mony like snowballs, who did me the honour to breakfast with me today, and I expect the same favour tomorrow if his Aunt don't keep him up all night at cards. . . . South Sea is an Hundred, and ten, all Stocks rise in proportion except mine. . . . Mrs. Floyd hath given me such an ill character I'll preach no more at Claydon."

25 Oct.  
1716.

*Lord F., from Covent Garden, to Ralph Verney*

"I am sorry we can't meet for tomorrow I doe sett out for Berkshire, I have the horses here in Towne, soe that our Ladyes are confined to Claydon till my return, for which reason I must make all the hast home that my business will permitt, otherwise I shoud make a tour to Essex, but that can't be without Ofending the fair sex at home, of which all good Husbands stand in great awe."

3 Nov.  
1716.

*Thomas Watson, from Edgcot, to Lord F.*

"My Lord,—In humble submition I send this to acquaint your Lordship of the Behaviour of your Servants towards Mee. My Lord, I Keep some Connies in some Bushes in my own Grounds for my own Use. On Friday your Lordshipp's Buttler and Keeper and A Nother Person come into my Grounds with four or five Doggs and every one A Gunn, and all Gott up into the Trees to Shoot the Connies, and my Servant coming in the Mean Time Beate off their Doggs off their Game and He was A comming home to Acquaint me therewith the Buttler Followed him all most Halfe Way A long my Grounds towards my House, and swore Severall Othes that he would Shoot Him, and went back to A Nother Labourer and said that he would be Revenged on him. My Lord, this is Straing Usage, and if these Things are suffered and Goe unpunished, Nether your Lordship nor any Body Else weill Bee Sufferd to keep anything About them. I humbly hope your Lordship will give me Free Liberty to Punish the Offenders as the Law directs. I am, my Lord, your Lordship's very humble servant att Command,

THOMAS WATSON."



*Ralph Palmer to Ralph Verney*8 Nov.  
1716.

"... I am extreemly busy doing necessary repairs at my next house [in Little Chelsea], which will cost me a great deal of money for nobody will take it without being put in thorow repair. Tis a pretty place and I hope I shall not let it under £35 p. ann. It has five rooms of a floor, and closets to every one, with a neat one over the porch and a pretty Ground to it, both Garden and Orchard, stabling for three or four horses, A Coach House, and special Cellars, and a Noble Room sixteen foot high and as wide, standing by itself in the garden. I Propose to let it for a long term of years to encourage the tenant to expend the more upon it.

I had a German with me to see it sent by a Foreigner he sayd at Court, but I have not heard of him since. I hope all your dear fire-side are well, I have but very piteous health, your Godson is a very lusty boy, Ralph grows very tall but very thin. The Luttrells are all Sick, she in bed with an Asthma, he with his mouth drawn aside by the Palsie, and Francis with a fitt.

My Sister Palmer is going into lodgings in Westminster to set up for herself, Sir Tho. [Dunck] has the Gout at next door, and his Lady just as she used to be."

Betty Verney reports that Lord Fermanagh has returned much out of order from Wasing, "the accomodation he met with was so very bad that he fasted more than he can bear."

8 Nov.  
1716.*Jack Baker to Lord Fermanagh*21 Feb.  
1717.

"My Lord,—My Time is not so much taken up about Invasion etc. but that I am at liberty to serve you. . . . Bank Stock is now at 107 and I can help you to 120 Stock, but it being an odd Sum no Broker will let you have it at the Markett Price but he will have some advance, though perhaps not much more than if you were to buy an even 100 stock. I this day heard that the Lord Bridgwater had laid down his place. . . . I thank Lady Fermanagh for the Hare she sent me, which though I was not at the eateing of it, yet I heard it was much commended."

Jack Baker, who is now established in London as a Linen Draper, sends his aunt, Lady Fermanagh, a gallon of Madeira, which he hopes she will like. An odd product of the Linenry.

27 Feb.  
1717.*Sir Thomas Cave to Ralph Verney*28 Feb.  
1717.

"... As I toucht your Quick, so tis term'd a Politic Banter, no I'm no true Politician, but I'm glad it had the effect to give You some remorse for your Notoriously slippery tricks, which is evident



by the propositions of amendment. Tis true, we both want mending, but you say Nothing Who shall beginn first, and I fear, whoever takes us to pieces to beginn to mend, will find us not worth rejoyn-ing. You Propose to see us next visitt you make to Bucks, if no unforeseen Accidents prevent you—in my troth I fansey it must be by some unforeseen Accident that We do then see You here, for tis the same as tyeing a Good Log of Wood at your Legg to go thither first, therefore alter your method of the Visitt and beginn here. . . . You know when I'm in town how my time is spent in the publick Service, but know you by these presents that I will beat up your quarters with a battallion of Militia Foot very soon, therefore prepare Free board for all the Ragamuffins of Westminster, toll, loll, de roll. And now a little for Violet, that Essex Champion, and first for the fair play you doubt of, she's very well recovered of the hurt she received, and is the only dogg suffered to bear the best Spaniell in England company in the Parlour, and for the donor's sake is got fedd, tho' my Wife does not like her phiz, nor shape, and thinks her very impudent, as she dayly steales the meat out of the favourite Catt's plate. As for her goodness, I think tis pretty well considering who bred her, she runns fast enough, especially while an hare keeps forward, and if another hitts, runns soon in, without hanging on't; if all yours went as fast I feare you saw but little sport with such Essex Jades as you hunt there. Mine from here keep her company very well, but her way of hunting is quite different from mine, which keep the Bell now in all this Country, but Violet is worth your giving and my thanks. I have one Dogg-Whelp of hers much harder and finer than ever she was. I'm 'most on the point of closing for this season to give Pussies a rest, I never knew Em so very stout as this year which is to be wondered at, because Sheep rott so very much everywhere. I thank God all Young Stock, both at home and at Rugby, are indifferent well, and improve well, I wish the same to yours."

9 May  
1717.

*Lord Fermanagh to Ralph Verney*

"Deare Ralph. . . . There has been a wedding at Winchindon between Gen. Whiteham's daughter and one Edwards a Gentleman of £2000 a yeare, she is pretty, the Dormers of Lee were invited to the dancing, this is such another Made Match as Ms. Pack's. Our family are some here and some at Chelsea, and I hope in a while we may meet at London and return home together.

Mrs. Busby hath left her son's house at Marsh, and Boards with Ms. Townsend in Marsh, I have not heard the occasion of their Quarrell. The Dormers went to town on Munday as alsoe did Sir John Conway, Sir H. Bunbury etc, and I believe the Hillesdon family went up the same day.

Give my service to all your good family and I rest your Lov.  
 Father, FERMANAGH."

*Elizabeth Verney, at Chelsea, to Lord Fermanagh, at Claydon* 5 May  
 1717.

"Honoured Sir,—I cannot omitt by the first conveyance to present you with my humble Duty and the respects of this family. . . there has happened some difference between my Uncle and Mr. Luttrell, which occasions an Intermission in their Visitts, but haveing heard the matter from one side only I am not capable of judging or representing it clearly, but believe there may be faults in both. I have not seen any of that family yet but I intend waiting on my mother and them this afternoon, my Sister Lovett is expected here to stay a few days."

Now that the Septennial Bill had passed, there was no election looming in Bucks, and Lord Fermanagh's Claydon letters are full of peaceful directions about the farms and the gardens. In June he went up to his usual town lodgings, and there, with very little warning, he expired on the 23rd of June 1717.

His widow must have missed him most; she had fully justified her frequent signature—"Yours to command till death"—and now she was left a forlorn figure in the broken circle which could not be put together again.



## BOOK II

1717-1752

"Family tradition and genealogical history . . . studies in themselves very insignificant and trifling, do nevertheless serve to perpetuate a great deal of what is rare and valuable in ancient manners, and to record many curious and minute facts which could have been preserved and conveyed through no other medium."

—*Waverley*, vol. i.



## DRAMATIS PERSONAE OF BOOK II

RALPH VERNEY, VISCOUNT FERMANAGH, later 1st EARL VERNEY.

CATHERINE, *née* PASCHALL, his Wife.

JOHN and RALPH, ELIZABETH and CATHERINE, their Children.

ELIZABETH VERNEY	}	Sisters of Ralph Verney.
MARY LOVETT		
MARGARET CAVE		

SIR THOMAS CAVE, Brother-in-law of Ralph Verney.

VERNEY, THOMAS, ELIZABETH and PENELOPE, Cave Children.

VERNEY, JOHN and BESSE, Lovett Children.

.....

HENRY PASCHALL of Baddow, Father of Catherine, Lady Fermanagh.

MARY (PASCHALL), MRS. STONE, Sister of Catherine.

JOHN STONE, her Husband.

.....

RALPH PALMER, Senr., Grandfather of Ralph, Lord Fermanagh.

RALPH PALMER, Junr., Uncle of Ralph, Lord Fermanagh.

DANIEL BAKER of Penn	}	Parents of the Dowager Lady Fermanagh.
MRS. BAKER		

DANIEL BAKER, Junr. of Penn, and many DAUGHTERS.

ELIZABETH, LADY FERMANAGH, *née* BAKER, the Dowager (widow of 1st Lord Fermanagh).

PENELOPE VICKERS, Cousin of Lord Fermanagh.

REV. WILLIAM VICKERS, her Husband.

.....

Clergy, Doctors, Lawyers, Stewards, Soldiers, Sailors.





A Conversation Piece: Ralph, 2nd Viscount Fermanagh, with his wife,  
two sons, and two daughters.

## CHAPTER XXIII

### CHANGE

JOHN, Lord Fermanagh, had kept up his interest at Westminster and at Claydon to the last.

His faithful friend and steward, Chaloner, acknowledges different letters received from his old master on the 16th and 20th of June; and replies about bricks, lime, old hay, and other estate matters. On the 18th, writing to Ralph, he is "Heartily sorry to hear the badd news that the sick man is not on the mending hand". In the next he hopes that "the weather being coul, that it will abate his Lordship's illness." But there is no hint of alarm. It is not till the 25th that the steward hears "that my Lord is dangerously ill"—and in the meantime, on the 23rd of June—John, 1st Lord Fermanagh, passed away in the 77th year of his age. The letters must have crossed in the post.

An old friend, Charles Goodwin, writes later to condole with Ralph:

"Of our being deprived of the Company of my late dear Master, but that God has received him to Himself in so quiet a manner, into everlasting rest into His Arms and high esteem of his dearest Relations and Friends is a huge mercy of God at the time of our Departure. 13 Sept. 1717.

In him I lose the most ancient of all my kind relations and friends. God bless and prosper all that are left, and belong to him."

"As the days of a tree", is the Prophet's simile of a man's life; and as the crash of one of the old elms, which had latterly been falling, in every winter storm, so the news of their master's death fell upon the Claydons. As when an elm falls, and the rooks, swaying in the top branches, and the small nesting birds, the squirrels and the rabbits amongst its roots, fly and scurry away to find a fresh



protector—so their human brothers were thrown into confusion and dismay. How numerous they were, and how kindly the head of the family had looked after them, the letters amply testify.

The country was in all the beauty of early summer; the June twilight made a late funeral possible. Ralph desired that it should be very Private—"My Father ordered it so, in his Will; if any neighbours ask what day, tell them Saturday or Monday, tho' it will be on Friday." Mr. Butterfield is asked to be in readiness, the Steward and the Household are very busy. "The Blacks", which Coleman had put away some twenty years before, are brought out, and "the Undertakers man is to hang the Summer Parlour in black and some other places". Uncle Palmer is coming down, so there must be a bed prepared for him and some others. Private as the funeral is to be, "there will be 18 coach horses and 6 saddle horses, for whom there must be room provided and old hay and other necessities".

There is this entry in the Middle Claydon Parish Register of Burials: "June 28, 1717. John Verney, Baronet of Belturbet and Ld. Visct. Fermanagh"—and an inconspicuous line at the bottom of the monument to his parents and grandparents, records the same name and date.

After the dispersal of the family party from the lodging over the grocer's shop in James' Street, Covent Garden, Ralph and Catherine did not settle down at once at Claydon House. There was Mr. Paschall's comfort to be thought of, as Catherine had always looked after him and her younger sister Mary; and there was much to be sold off at Baddow, which to Catherine meant home.

The change in the ownership of Claydon involved many more changes, and they perhaps fell most heavily on Lady Fermanagh, who had been such an admirable hostess to all her husband's friends. She had reigned at Claydon for twenty years and was leaving at once.

There was plate to be weighed and valued, her four coach-horses and some valuable black hogs to be disposed of—the hogs crossed, perhaps, like those of Sir Thomas Cave, with the wild Tangier breed. In every case the steward first referred her letters to her step-son for his approval; and assured his lordship that the "Dowager should learn nothing from him of his Lordship's designs for the future".

*The Dowager Lady Fermanagh to Lord F.*

1717.

“My Lord,—I am very much surprised in what you writt about the Tankard, for I assure you the Tankard is mine and I paid for it out of my own money, indeed a great while ago. . . . I had sent for it up to town to have it changed away with my father’s Tankard which can’t be mended but that Mrs. Verney told me she loved to drink out of a Tankard best . . . so Sir you may Judg if I would have sent for it up if it had been my Lord Fermanagh’s—for all this past between us one morning abed—and God knows I did not think my Lord was so near his end, and my Lord was allwayes so exact in his plate, that he never left the plate in my keeping but what was my own, nor put it in any Bill, and what was his he always made a Bill of, so I don’t doubt you will find the Tankard set down paid for, as I hope he has done both in Justice to himself and me. I hope let my circumstances be what they will I shall have such principles of Honour as not to have mentioned a piece of plate that was not my own. Sir, if you are convinced that I have no right nor title to the Kettle and Lamp, otherwise than as a present from you, I accept it as such and return you thanks for it. I believe my Lord, you took my letter concerning the Horses not as I meant it, which was that I had rather you had the four Horses at threescore pounds than another at more money. . . . If you don’t think them four worth three score pounds then take them at fifty-five. I beg my Service to my Lady, Mrs. Verney and Cousin Lloyd, and I am dear Sir, yours to command,

E. FERMANAGH.

Many estates in the county were coming into the market; the smaller Squires and Yeomen found it difficult to resist the prices which the owners of large estates were willing to pay for land adjoining their own. The latter often found in land a secure investment, when the bursting of the South Sea Bubble, and other speculations, had shown the danger of schemes reckoned as safe as government stock.

The owners of Stowe and of Claydon were always on the alert when there were rumours of sales. The most desirable land adjacent to the Verney property was the Manor House and estate of East Claydon. It had been owned for a time by Sir Ralph Verney’s eldest son, Edmund, by his marriage with the heiress Mary Abel, but after the untimely deaths of his two sons, a daughter, and a baby granddaughter, the property reverted to his widow, Mary Verney, who continued to live at East Claydon, much beloved by her poor neighbours, though often not in her right mind.

On her death, in 1715, she was succeeded by her cousin, William Abel, described as a "songster and fiddler", who had a house in the village and constantly figured in the social life of the parish.

It was this William Abel who approached Ralph, Lord Fermanagh, a few months after his succession to Claydon, from Bristol. Lord Fermanagh, who had not yet settled on special lodgings, was at the Iron Railings, in Charles Street, Covent Garden.

3 Jan.  
1718.

"My Lord,—I was loath in a Thing which required no haste to give you the trouble of a letter . . . and indeed I have some indetermined Thoughts about the Sale of my Estate; however att present I think I am fixt upon it, my circumstances being such that for the future (if it please God to prolong my Life) I must (as my phisicians tell me) give over all Business which requires Action, or causes the least uneasiness imaginable. I am sure a country Life with a Country Estate requires the one, and can't be without the other.

By drinking too freely of cooling Liquers in order to dilute my Blod and put off the Gout (which it did effectually) I flung myselve into a diabetes, much the more dangerous distemper of the two, and I am here at Bristol for a cure. . . . Now as Inaction and Quiteness are the injoyments of Old Age (att leastwise they will bee soe to me, with the Help of a Coffee House) in a little time, I promised the injoyment of Em in town, where perhaps I may have an opportunity of disposing of my daughters.

My Lord, when the Ferment of Money is over, I shall treat with your Lordship, either by myself or by my son."

This purchase was so desirable to the Claydon Estate that it must have given Mr. Chaloner and the family solicitors much congenial occupation, but after the usual delays it was happily concluded, and Mr. Abel was left to the "quiteness and inaction" which he esteemed to be the "Injoyment of Old Age".

5 May  
1718.

Ralph, being elected to succeed his father in Parliament, had to be a good deal at Westminster, but he is constantly writing to Chaloner about the estate affairs at Claydon, and he remembers the old people in the almshouses. ". . . If I had thought of it in time, you should have given the lops off the lime trees at the Alms Row to some in the Alms-houses, and you may still do it if you think it best."

Ralph and his wife are to visit Waseing, but they desire Chaloner to go there first to find them a lodging, and to look at the trees. Ralph writes:



"I shall send my children to Claydon, and you must provide meat and other necessities for the family. I would not continue the servants' board wages, but till the children get thither." 25 Mar. 1718.

His own wagon is coming with goods from Baddow, and Mrs. Chaloner is asked "to provide something handsome for the man to eat, and to lay him in the house, as he is the owner of the horse he drives".

Betty Verney writes a letter to her brother, which he docket, "about Mrs. Smith leaving of Lady Dowager".

". . . I had a letter from Mrs. Smith, when she went to Town; she intended to leave her place in 2 months at Fardest, but was there desired not to think of moving till the year is up, which she shall think an age, for she longs to be from her lady, she being worse than ever." 10 Mar. 1718.

Betty, as we know, had no love for the Dowager, but Catherine, to whom Mrs. Smith was coming, had previously written to beg her to stay on: "it would be no manner of disappointment to me for I would not willingly disoblige my Lady".

Mr. Frances Luttrell writes to Mrs. Elizabeth Baker, at Penn, a long account of the marriage of Captain Cope, at which the Luttrell and Palmer families were present, and Mr. Calvert and his wife and two daughters. He describes in great detail their beautiful wedding clothes, and the poverty of the refreshments. He mentions that two of Lady Shuckburgh's daughters are staying with Mrs. Porter at a house near them in Chelsea. 12 May 1718.

This autumn saw Mary Paschall married to John Stone of Brightwell; a happy event, but if Ralph and Catherine were to live in their new home, who was to care for Mr. Paschall? This difficulty was happily solved by the Rector and his wife offering him a home, and by Ralph asking Mr. Paschall to look after the Essex farms, that now belonged to his sons-in-law, and which would give him the outdoor occupation which he loved.

Catherine writes from Baddow:

"Mr. Pocklington [the Rector] has sent my Father word he shall be very glad to have him and should have any convenience he could make for him, so the old gentleman is mightily pleas'd and as easy as ever I see him in my life. If you want any of your neck-cloths or Cufs to be washt let Joe give em to Mrs. Bety at Ant Adams, for she has em done very well and cheap; pray don't wear em too dirty." 23 June 1718.



Catherine was not unreasonably anxious about her husband's personal safety. She had just met an Essex neighbour, a Mr. Adams,

30 Nov.  
1717.

"who was robd between Ilford and Romford by 2 horsemen and 2 footmen; they took from him his mony, watch, ring and several other things to the value of 12 or 14 pound. His man struck at one of Em with a hanger upon which they pluckt him from his horse, beat him violently and then threw him into a pond, but as the poor fellow was struggling to get out, a gentleman's Servant happened to come by and helpt him, and the roags hearing a horse made off, and left Mr. Adams' portmanto in the road. I beg, my deare, you won't stay late at Chelsea, nor be ever out of your lodging late, for I have ten thousand fears for you."

7 Feb.  
1718.

*Lady Fermanagh, at Baddow, to her Husband*

"... Last night I had a great deal of discourse with my Father; he desired a few stiks cut out of the woodstak, to set up a little crib for his mare to be fed in, at Mr. Pocklington's feald; and desired the press in the brushing-room, both which I told him he should have. He is mightily pleas'd and desir'd me to go and see Mr. Pockn. and look what conveniences are proper for him; he said he woud take as much care of the Wood and Manor and all the Estate as if it was his own, and I believe he designs mightly kindly for little Ralph."

So having settled her father comfortably, Catherine could turn her mind to her new home at Claydon.

21 Oct.  
1718.

*Ralph Palmer to Lord Fermanagh*

"... I thank you for so kindly enquiring after my health. I am but just returned from Court, where I have been at Balls and Plays, a little to alter my way of living, that I may gain health thereby. I take nothing to be worse for health than perfect and exact regularity, or all irregularity. . . . I desire my humble service to Lady Fermanagh, Sister Verney and Mrs. Stone, if with you, and your dear children have my best affection for them."

12 Jan.  
1719.

Ralph finds himself a man of influence as an M.P., though he has hardly had time to realise it. His father-in-law, Henry Paschall, writes to him on behalf of their Rector, Mr. Pocklington, begging him "to give his particular notice when the Business of Hopps comes to be debated, for as much as a considerable share of the Proffits of his living [of Baddow] hath a dependance thereon".

*To Ralph, Lord Fermanagh, in London, from Lady Fermanagh,  
at Claydon* 5 Feb.  
1719.

"My dear Love,—I shall with great joy send Mairs on Sunday next with the expectation of seeing my own dearest, which I long for more than I can express. . . . Bring twelve pound of Starch of four pence hapenny a pound, and three pound of the indigoe of two shilling a pound; for the Tea I had rather have it from Mrs. Lewens, for the Isteds is hardly ever good; don't forgett my Coffe, for I am almost out. The Jaks [pike] were all well put into the pond and the round pound, and none where there were any carp." She is so afraid of thieves she cannot sleep.

Lord Fermanagh wishes to bring her down a present for Christmas. Catherine wants nothing for herself.

". . . But pray, bye Jack tow pare of dark grey stockings, tis not any mater for the fineness, as to have em thick and warm for his legs. I will wrap one of his old ones up in a paper and give John Innes for fear you should not know his size." 13 Dec.  
1718.

She is making lace and wants "a thousand (yards) of fine thread from the thred shop. Brother and sister Stone have sent me two Brace of delicate carp, a hare and three dozen of larks for the children." 23 Jan.  
1719.

There is a message from John, who wants "a pair of silver buckels—pray dear Papa bye me some." There is a more interesting commission a week later—Catherine wants 4 copies of "A Week's Preparation to the Sacrament. They are for the servants and a Bible for Jack Hinton."

There were several books published after the Restoration of *A Week's Preparation for Receiving the Holy Sacrament*. Bishop Ken's *Winchester Manuel* contained such prayers, and his famous Morning and Evening Hymns, with which the Verney children were familiar, first appeared in this Manual.

There was another *Week's Preparation*, which quickly passed through twenty-five editions before 1700, with the imprimatur of the Archbishop of Canterbury, which was perhaps the book that Catherine wished to give her handmaidens.

The Rt. Rev. Edmund Gibson, Bishop of Lincoln, had probably held a visitation in Bucks; he was soon to become Bishop of London.

It is pleasant to think that Catherine's interest in her household was not confined to the farm details, of which she sends such careful accounts to her husband.

19 Mar.  
1719.

*Lady Fermanagh, at Claydon, to her Husband*

"... The hors was so bad on Tuesday and groan'd so, I thought he would a dyed, and when they went to lead him out he lifted up his leg and could not set it down again in a quarter of an hour; he had several holes broak in his leg, so yesterday morning I sent for Jasper, and he has put in a rowell and laid a poultes to his leg to draw out the anguish, made of mallows, turnips, and wormwood. The poultes has given him great ease, and he is much brisker and better today and lay down last night, which Robin says he has not done before this three weeks. The man showed Robin exactly how to dress it, so I paid him what he askt, which was half a crown for his journey, one shilling for the rowell and sixpence for salves to heal the holes when the poultes is done with. The man was against turning him out till the weather is warmer. . . . I hope Joe told you to take my cannister out of my sister's box for a pound of green tea. I believe you would best get Cousin Peg to tell Mrs. Lewen how bad my last was. I shall want a dozen of blew and white China plates; when you have time you may look for some. I think you should take care about some wine, either port or Galitia, to save the French—which with duty and sarvice as due, I remain your Loving Wife and Servant, C. F."

"We had a most furious fine supper at the Doctor's, one dish of meat more than we have at our house; there was the Abeles, the Smiths, and the Loundeses; Mr. Butterfield went there in the morning and told them I did not intend to bring the children, because it would be late; so the Doctor sent a man over a purpose to desire Jak and Bess might come, and lye there all night, for Nany had cried all day. So I carried Em, but I brought Em home with me; it was 3 a'clock because of the moon, but I thank God they got no cold."

These tender and efficient letters, written during the first months of the great change in their lives (from which only a few extracts can be given here), were cherished as they deserved to be. It was, perhaps, after the wife's death that her husband tied them together in a little parcel, having marked each letter as from "My dear Lady Fermanagh", with its date.

8 Feb.  
1719.

*Lady Fermanagh to her Husband, at Mr. Neals, an Apothecary's  
in Southampton Street, Covent Garden*

"My dearest Dear,—. . . Cousin Jack talks of going to see my sister Stone and of going to Ireland in the Spring. Ther was no wine came down on Thursday. Innes says the wagon was got to Acton before

it came. I'me sadly vexed for your clothes, I think Mr. Palmer [the tailor] spoys all he makes; for ay my Deare when you come take vast care of the floods, for the waters have been prodigious high. I long for our meeting, pray God send us a happy one for I never spent so uncomfortable a winter since I maryed, nor I would not live so long again without you for all the Estate. I am my Dear Love's most affectionate wife and servant,

C. F."

The Tailor's bill has been preserved:

*The Right Honble. Ld. Visct. Fermanagh,—Dr.  
to Kath. Barradall & Samll. Palmer*

		£	s.	d.
Jan. the 20th.	Making a Collrd. Clo. Suite . . . . .		18	6
	Buttons for the Coat . . . . .		5	0
	Small Ditto . . . . .		2	9
	Dimity to Lyne the Body of Vest . . . . .		3	0
	Double Wadding in Skirts . . . . .		3	0
	Shamoy Linings & Pocketts . . . . .		5	6
	Ribbon att Knee & Silk Puffs . . . . .		2	0
	Buckrum Canvas & Stays . . . . .		3	0
	Silk Thread and Twist . . . . .		5	6
		£2	8	3
Feb. the 9th.	Making a Light Drab Coat . . . . .		10	0
	Wadding in Skirts . . . . .		1	6
	Buckarum Canvas & Stays . . . . .		2	0
	Silk Thread & Twist . . . . .		3	6
			17	0
		£3	5	3

Lady Fermanagh had the pleasure that spring of a visit from the Rector of Baddow with good news of her father.

The new owners were settling down at Claydon, and Catherine was falling into the way of abusing Innes, the carrier, as the former mistresses had always done. He charged "Up box" and "Down box" for luggage to and from London—an excellent plan, when he did not leave both "Up box" and "Down box" behind him.

Home affairs were looking more cheerful, when a bolt from the blue reminded them that often—

When sorrows come, they come not single spies,  
But in Battalions.



Apr.  
1719.

From the time of his succeeding to Stanford, Sir Thomas Cave had been the most constant and the most interesting of John, Lord Fermanagh's, correspondents. The four Rugby schoolboys had gone from Stanford to Claydon, equally welcomed in both houses; and now that Claydon hospitalities were for the time eclipsed, the news of Sir Thomas Cave's sudden death came as a crushing blow to the whole family connection.

He was only thirty-nine, and had prided himself on his wholesome out-of-door life, his temperate habits and constant exercise. No man could be more beloved and valued in his home, his parish, and his county. Strange that his brother-in-law, Ralph, now Lord Fermanagh, never strong in health, whom Sir Thomas had so often tried to stir up to a more active country life, survived him more than thirty years. That brother and their uncle, Ralph Palmer, were not going to fail poor Margaret Cave now. The tidings seemed to have reached Claydon first from Chelsea.

23 Apr.  
1719.

*Ralph Palmer to Lord Fermanagh*

"My Lord,—Since your Sister's arrivall, we have been alarmed with the sad news of Sir Thomas Cave's death, and my Lady is importunate with me to come down to her. I hope in God to find your Ldp. there, or meet you at least; I shall go down in the Northampton Coach on Saturday and I have writt for their Chariot on Sunday morning. We are all extreamly concern'd, as I daresay you all are."

29 Apr.  
1719.

*(From Stanford)*

"My Lord,—I am sorry I was not so happy as to meet you at Stanford, so quickly have I been here after your departure. . . . I cannot find here the Lease but only the release for the Settlement of this House and Park, I wish you would search for it, nor are there any counterparts of my Lady's marriage settlements. . . . I should be most heartily glad if you could come over, but not if your health will not permit it, for I am grieved to hear you are not mighty well. I propose going on Friday to my Estate in this County and hope to be back Sunday or Monday night and shall stay here all that week, indeed poor Lady Cave both wants and deserves good assistance, and the best helps I can give her I shall exert for her and the pretty children. Lady Cave is pretty well, the children have all coughs."

9 May  
1719.

". . . I am now leaving this Country and our friends in such a method as I hope will end much more to the good and happiness of this family than it has been to their terror. Lady Cave with

concern and fears and doubts has been much oppressed, she has an ugly Cough and does not rest, but I think she is now acting as Executrix, and I believe the goods without doors and within will now be appraised. She is resolved to live at as little expense as possible, and we are trying to lett the gardens, but not so as to dismantle them, and she intends to graze the Park and keep up a very few Deer. It is 200 acres and is looked upon to be worth £150 per annum. In this she has the precedent of our relation, Lady How, for I am satisfied whatever trouble and care she may incur by her Executorship she would incur more by seeing it out of her power, and others acting it may be in some things to the prejudice of her or hers, without having it in her power to avoyd it.

We have pitch'd upon Mr. Harry Cave, for the man to bring all affairs under their proper heads, methodically into book-keeping for Just and Fair Accounts, and he has been so kind as to undertake it. We are summoning in the Tenants to bring in their last acquittances, which will let us into the arrears, and I verily think my Lady will be much easier when business is going on. Tis some advantage that her advisers will be no expense to her.

Here are a family of great hopes, who deserve all that can possibly be done for them. . . . I hope it will not be so bad with Sir Verney as was at first apprehended . . . the Servants have due between 200 and 300 pounds, Lady Cave will buy most of the household goods rather than have it stript, which will be of no great value. . . . I find the title writings of the Estate are with Mr. John Gore, the Hamburg Merchant in Basing Hall Street, and hope Sir Thomas has an abstract of them in his Scrutoire at London. . . . I should be much delighted in the concurrence of your Judgement in what is done, which I know to be a good one, and therefore must lament the loss of it upon the spot. . . . Lady Cave, Mrs. Lovett, Sir Verney and myselfe desire our best respects may be acceptable to yourself, Lady Fermanagh etcet . . . and I am, at the end of a very long epistle, your most affectionate Uncle and humble servant."

*Lady Cave, at Stanford, to Lord Fermanagh*

15 May  
1719.

"I believe my Deare Brother is so true a Judge of my afflicted condition, that I need make no excuses for my Silence to him, but tis with great difficulty, from a Bleeding Heart, and Trembling Hands, I now for the first time use my pen. I was desirous by Mr. Lovett to salute you, dear Brother, with my most gratefull acknowledgements for your charitable assistance and personal comforts in my great distress, and wish you had bin here to have seen my Uncle and consult together. His advice and assistance have been truly friendly and helpful, and Sir John Cheshire's opinion

tending plainly to the same, I am entered upon the Executorship, and hope the same Providence as has protected me in this great triall will enable me to go through all my troubles with submission, and doing justice to everybody, and as this is the only way (they think) to save the family, I should gladly undergo many hardships for the sake of that, and the fulfilling the desire of dear Sir Thomas, whose misfortunes were heavy upon him, no doubt. Pray God, I may be capable of retrieving Em for his Dear remains and credit to all. We had the cattle appraised and the Grey Guelding sold for £25, before my Uncle went away, many of the other nags I fear will fetch little. . . . I propose to take as much of my five thousand pounds for I can't do without, if I stay here and the most creditable way to keep things together. I think you and Sir Thomas bought lately a hogshead of red wine between you, I would be glad to sell it again, if I could get anyone to take it. . . . If you would have any of our plate, you can have first choice, if you please. . . . My tenderest affections are with my dear Brother and Sister and their fireside, begging the prayers of all for the Fatherless and Widow, who is (in whatsoever adversity or distress) your most affect. Sistr. and Servt.,  
M. CAVE."

Lady Cave writes again to her brother a long business letter from Stanford: she is very grateful for all that he and Uncle Palmer are doing for her. Lord Denbigh is to have the six coach-horses for £140. The old bay hunter and Dog Toby have been sold; "the little grey colt" her brother advised her to keep "accidentally hung herself, the day after you left, so we have misfortunes continually".

8 June  
1719.

". . . My design is to send up my own Dressing Plate to sell and with that money purchase so much of tother as will be necessary for my use here. Tis all fashionable I think and I fancy the Shaving Basin, Pot and Two Boxes to it, for washball and spoynge, you think usefull for yourself; and there is some Salvers, Tankards, Candlesticks, Chocolate Pots, Bottle Handles and some other things I shant need; and if you write to my Uncle of anything you will have he'll take care for you. Sister Verney I desire should have knowledge of it too, for I wish first to serve my friends in whatever I can. Lady Cheshire is about getting me mourning furniture (it being their advice) and tis to be in the Parlour and Hall. . . . The postillion is to goe with the horses, and Mr. Huwson is gon to be Mr. Chester's Buttler, the small arrears of wages, as they goe I pay Em. . . . I've been in great care for Morley, who is extream ill, soe bad that I sent for Doctor Farrar to him, if he is not in a Consumption he has hopes of him, being a little better, but I much fear for him, and really I should have a loss in him, he being my most



capable Man Servt. and for his Love to his good Master and family he promises me all the diligence in the world and that his life shall be spent in Duty to Me, studying my advantage, and truly I hope he'll live and perform it.

Poor Mr. Vickers has not long survived Sir Thomas, but I hope left his widow freer from troubles and full of comforts, I think she deserves all he could do for her. I have a most terrible Cough and have had it ever since you were here. With Dutiful respects for the young Flock are offered to you, my sister, and the dear little ones, with Sincere Service from Sister Lovett. M. CAVE."

*Ralph Palmer to Lord Fermanagh*

11 June  
1719.

"... I have not advised your Sister Lovett to go to Ireland, in case she will put those wheels in motion for the good of her family and self which may as well be done I think while she was here. I am sorry you cannot find the lease of Lady Cave's jointure; if we were to make a title, we could make none without it, so it must remain a secret. She has had prodigious luck in selling horses, a three-years-old colt for forty guineas. I cannot tell how, poor Lady, she can call anything her own but her jointure, but the furniture of the house she will keep, and what plate she thinks to do with, so that may remain with the last ... for no legacy is due till debts are paid and even what she calls her own, Jewels and Assets in her hands, till the debts are cleared. I have waited on Sir John Cheshire, whom my Lady fancies is a mighty friend, he carrying himself very rude and surly to me, and railed at Sir Thomas for his usage of him with reflections upon my lady's friends. This was not consistent with the professions he made, so that I have done my consultations with him. ... I have spoken with most of the creditors myself, who are easy. ... Tis strange Sir T. should make a devise of the Home and Park to pay debts, altho he had settled it upon his son. The girls' fortunes are unalterable, neither equity nor Parliaments will touch them."

Mr. Palmer is to see Mr. Cave, who will undertake the estate accounts. He lives at Coventry, and Mr. Palmer wishes to know Lord Fermanagh's opinion "as to what salary he should pay him".

The Cave boys and their Lovett cousins returned to Rugby School in the first days of June; Sir Verney Cave was a Baronet at 14, and was never mentioned by any relation, except his mother, without his title. He was deprived of his father's counsel and control at an age when he most needed them, but his mother was resolved that his education should not suffer, and was taking



advice about an University career, which less enlightened parents often thought superfluous for an eldest son.

Tommy, whose health gave much cause for anxiety, seemed to be the most like his father, with a certain dry humour and a cheerful outlook on life.

The daughters, Elizabeth and Penelope, were provided for, thanks to their grandfather's insistence on marriage settlements, and in later years they both married lawyers, with comfortable incomes.

It is not explained why so wealthy and careful a man as Sir Thomas Cave should have left such debts; perhaps the heavy costs of his elections had not been cleared off. Whatever the cause, his widow went through much pecuniary anxiety, with the understanding help and sympathy of her widowed sister, Mary Lovett, who was anxious to repay the years of kindness which had made Stanford a home to her and her fatherless children.

28 Mar.  
1720.

*Lady Cave, at Stanford, to Lord F., at Mrs. Merry's in  
Suffolk Street*

"My dear Brother,— . . . I am much obliged to you for the trouble you took about the watch, for which, as my occasions are very great I was desirous of the utmost penny and to try all ways I could for it. I wrote to my Uncle about a Tenant I fear some loss by, the fellow is now in gaol for another debt, but we have taken most of his stock into the park. . . . Your afflicted sister and servant,  
M. CAVE."

The appointment of their parish clergyman had been among her husband's many interests; there was now a vacancy and Lady Cave had been approached on behalf of an applicant. She writes to her brother:

". . . I have sent into the neighbourhood where Mr. Pinly is Curate, to find out his Character and he was met, and dropped upon people of this very town, who mightily commended him, and said they were never so pleased with a Parson, being a mighty easy good-tempered man, a good preacher and sober, and his Wife a very genteel good woman. . . . His extraction, I have heard, was mean, some of his neighbours thought he dealt in timber, and all say he is rich . . . but either way, I think tis an admirable qualification for this place, and riches better than family for us. I can't see any objection, I beg you will tell me, for I never saw him nor hear of him more than I have wrote. . . . It is an unlucky

time by the fall of Stocks and Lands, but dont you think both will rise again, when the Parliament is sitting, for tis said the South Sea Company have proposals for their advantage, to make to the Parliament, and tis hardly to be supposed they'll be denied anything there; not that I would for such expectations put off a good purchaser, if I can find one. I hope you and my Uncle can form a scheme for me, for a journey to town, or stay there, is not convenient to my circumstances. . . . I daresay both you and my Uncle will contrive the best for me in all points."

The Rev. John Pinley was educated at Balliol and had been an assistant master at Rugby School; he was therefore eminently fitted to befriend the boys. He was appointed vicar of Stanford in 1720 by Lady Cave, in the name of Sir Verney, not yet of age. The parish of Stanford-on-Avon numbered the great William Laud among its vicars, in 1607, so John Pinley was treading in venerated footprints of long ago.

Lady Cave's letters during 1720 are all about business: she is trying to sell the deer to neighbouring parks, and she is anxious to transfer a mortgage which Lady Broughton holds on Stanford to her brother. "Tommy writes me word he likes school and is well, only a cold." 18 July 1720.

Ralph Palmer watches over Margaret's affairs, and writes to her brother at intervals. He thanks for venison, which Betty Verney has helped them to partake of.

". . . Lady Cave was in much trouble about a Tenant of Sir Verney's who is become bankrupt, I have given her the best advice I can about it. I wish she may meet with a Chap for the land at Swinford, Mrs. Lovett has given her particulars of it in town, but the country Attorneys are the men that drive those bargains best. . . . I should think it rarely well sold if she could make £15,000 of it, but she talks of 60 years' purchase, and tis but a scabby Estate (methinks). There is a great many cottages and out of repair too, and tis common field land mixt with other titles. Mr. Luttrell is very ill. Your Venison yesterday hapen'd to grace my son Ralph's birthday." 11 Aug. 1720.

Lady Cave writes from Stanford to Lord Fermanagh, she has had all the boys at home to see Sister Lovett, and with great diligence and straitness she has "penned off" a great many of the creditors, but there are still some heavy bills. "Having expended much already, and my mourning furniture soon to pay for, I have very lately been at a great charge in completing my Team," 5 Apr. 1721.

which my Sister Lovett had the first hansell of, it being just ready to draw her from Northampton and performed well, and at the Plow the day after."

3 Nov.  
1720.

*The Dowager Lady Fermanagh to Lord F., at Claydon*

"... There is a report in town my cousin Vickers tells me that Coll. Lloyd is dead. I hope it is not true, for his own sake, his lady's and poor cousin Ruth.

The King is expected tomorrow; here is great robbing both on the rode and in town, to which place I came on Monday night last. My service to my lady with my tender affection to your young flock and service to cousin Adams.—I am my lord yours most affely.  
to command, E. FERMANAGH."

*Lady Cave to Lord Fermanagh*

"Dear Brother,—I am truly glad to hear my Sister is past the Danger of her late distemper, and congratulate & rejoice with you both upon her recovery, wishing You may enjoy many returns of this season together in full comfort and happyness, & shall be glad to hear your little family hold well, tho' I think the small pox can never come at a betr. age than theirs, & I hope if they shoud have it, it may be as favourable & less dangerous then it has been to their Mama, & then I think twould be a Blessing to them & Sattisfaction to You, I'me sure I shoud esteem it so to me if mine were in her condition, especially Verney, who must now very soon take his chance in the world. Pray God send him a good setting out. Mr. Holyoke's knowlige and recomendation of Dr. Baron and the General good character he bears, made me enquire after Baliol College, & Mr. Holyoke wrote to the Dr. about a Tutor, & he recomends one Mr. Bree as you'le see in his answer, which I'le enclose, & a since from that Mr. Bree to Mr. Pinley, for I would have Your judgment & my Uncle's too, of the Man, if I possibly coud before we fix, for tis a Good Tutor, properly Quallified, that I cheiffly aim at & such in any College (very few excepted) woud please him & me too. Mr. Bree is Mr. Pinley's acquaintance & he comends him for a good sort of Man, and the Doctr. you'le see for a Diligent one, which is a good property, but with that I wish for a Gentelley behaved & bright ingenious Man in conversation, which might engage Youth to delight in their company, & inspire him with Noble & Honourable thoughts & Principles; a Gentleman has comended this Mr. Bree to me, and I have endeavoured farther after his character, which from all I can hear is sd. to be an honest and good sort of man, but not that Polite Gentell Man (tho Civill & good temperd.) we coud wish for to Brighten his Genious and



improve his Manners, & except I had some freind there first that I coud depend on for judgment to converse a little with, & choose a proper Tuetor for him, I think we can make but a sort of a blind-fold choice, & tis of So great a Consequence that I am vastly perplex'd how to do it rightly, and I have no knowlige of any there except a little acquaintance with one Mr. Holmes, a fellow and Pupil Monger at St. John's College, who was once some time Curat at Crick; he was a Gentell Man & very ingenious, & I have heard he is esteem'd an extraordinary Tuetor there, & was Proctr. a year ago, & the Head of that College. Dr. De Lawn is a famous Man to, but I have heard it Doubted whether any of Verney's Rank ever goes to that College, and one wou'd not have him singular; Sir John Cheshyre has over & over repeated his offer of going with Verney & therefore I believe it must be about Easter, for his leisure time, & he says that won't admit of more than 2 nights stay in Oxford, which will be too short a time to fix him except the College & Tuetor are chose before, & matters prepared in a readiness to receive him. Sir John has proposed, & seems to wish, Verney might come to London to stay a month or six weeks before he goes to Oxford, & I believe it will be very pleasing to Verney to do so, but at first I should be glad of your approbation in it. A schoolfellow of Verney's Lady Broughton's son, went last week to Baliol College, my Lady excepted against Mr. Bree only as being a Warwickshire Man, & his Tuetor's Name I hear is Wilson, but I know no more of him. Master Lovet & Verney went to Rugby this week again, those at home are pretty well at prest. and desire their Dutys may be acceptable at Chelsea, with the Service of your most affect. Sister & Humble servt., M. CAVE.

P.S. Sistr. Lovett sends her congratulatory Service to you & my Sister upon her recovery. When You & my Uncle have perused Dr. Baron's & Mr. Bree's Letters pray inclose em in a case to me & send em again next post, if You can."

Sir John Cheshire, Knight, was a Serjeant-at-Law, and had married Elizabeth Cave, Sir Verney's aunt. The lady who proposed to receive Verney in London must have been his second wife, as Sir Thomas wrote in 1705 of Sister Cheshire's death from smallpox.

Ralph Palmer writes to Lord Fermanagh:

"... I bid twenty guineas for an horse in town, I saw in a hackney Coach from Northampton, too much really I thought, and the lowest price made me by Smith at the Bell Savage was £30 and I daresay it never cost more than 16 or 17. . . . I hear often from Stanford, and wish it lay in my power to doe more for that family. I am glad my Lady is something better. . . . Mun Challoner is dead, aged above 90, as I understand your old Neighbour Chaloner is too. 13 Aug. 1719.



... Mr. Stockwell, first Clerk in Mr. Smith the Teller's office, married Smith the Organ-maker's Widow worth £4000. I think our Revd. Mr. White gets ten pounds a year by Mr. Chaloner's death, and wish they woud get some good Economy with it too."

*Lady Cave to Lord Fermanagh*

She has been anxious about a mortgage which Lady Francklyn was pressing her to pay off.

6 Sept.  
1721.

"I have been forced to comply with my Lady though it is what we can't well bear, but since I can find no other way I must submit to oppression. We have had Sir John Cheshire, his Lady (and Lady Laws with them), here five of six days. Sir John's journey was on purpose to see us, and to offer his advice for the good of the family. I let him know how I had gone on in all matters, and he highly approves, and thinks I have gone thro' wonderfully. He was extream kind to all the children, and particularly in discoursing and examining Verney, with whom he is greatly pleased, and says he woud not but a come this journey for the satisfaction he finds in him, who he says he finds surpassing the good character he had allways heard of him, and that he'se beyond School knowledge, and discoursed Mr. Holyoke kindly about him, and to enquire into Colleges and matters towards his removal; he told him if twas a time he was at liberty from business he'de carry him to Oxford himself in his coach and see him placed there; they seem to think Lent the most proper time for transplanting thither. In the interim Sir John desired Mr. Holyoke to enquire into the state and customs of the College he recommends, which is Baliol, the head of it being his acquaintance and a man of great character, and Mr. Holyoke said he had wrote to him and would again, as Sir John desired, to know which particular tutor he would recommend, fit for a Younge Gentleman of Quallity and Consequence, that would be a credit (as Sir John says) to any College, as well as to the School he goes from. Mr. Holyoke is to let me know what information he getts; for the good discipline of the College, and a proper tutor, is what we seek after, and woud be determined by. The expenses as to Colleges vary something, but Sir John and my Lady said they would enquire of Lady Moneax what her son's were who is now I think at Trinity, and that might give us some light into the Charge of setting out as well as his allowance, they being of equall quallity, and my Lady they knew allowed him nothing for extravagances, but just enough to live creditably, and that with good managment they may doe with £200 a yeare, and their servants' wages and board wages payd besides, but not under; My Lady sent me a particular of Sir Humphey Moneaxes expenses in the College at first setting out, and I find the same cant be done for Verney under

£200, which is a deal for us, but I hope he'll deserve it. Sir John says tis pitty he should be discouraged, for he deserves much other wayes. Sir John desires to furnish him with what books he had a fancy for, or wanted, and took a list of Em with him. He had made Betty a present in town, he gave Tommy three gines, and Penney two here, which I think was very kind, as was all his expressions to Em and his freedom with Em. Our Sons are at School pretty well and Master Lovett's arm its full strength, but now not quite strait, and we fear it never will be; Miss Lovett is at Mrs. Coles', with Miss Shuttleworth, all the family dined here today and seem resolved to keep Miss yet awhile. My sister and Penney have bad colds, and I have a soar throate, but all joyn in respects to you and your family, with, Dear Brother, yours most affectionately,

M. CAVE."

*Lady Cave, at Stanford, to Lord Fermanagh*

27 Nov.  
1721.

"... I receiv'd yours of the 2nd inst., and am glad you find your habitation convenient, and hope my little Nephews are as well pleased with theirs, and question not the advantages and improvements they reap by that change, and wish it as suitable to their healths as learning, and then I think the parting with them is fully compensated for. The apprehension of Tommy's weak Constitution I find very greivous, infering that he is unable to undergo a School Life, but when this winter is past with good nursing at home, I pray God he may be recruited and strengthened for it. He has had a return of his fever and pain today. . . . He has taken three quarts of Bark and is to go on with it longer, so I hope he'll pick up again. Sir George Beaumont lent me an Ass, else I could have had none, and it gives milk for him but once a day, which the Doctors think not enough for him. . . . I had an unexpected letter t'other day from Mr. Cave at Coventry, to acquaint me of the Death of my Lady Cave, and that her son Roger hoped I would let her desire be fulfilled of lying by Sir Roger in the vault here, to which I readily consented. She dyed of the smallpox in Lancashire. I have heard formerly that she made her rents payable every fortnight, tho' she never did receive Em oftener than half-year or yearly. . . . I want to know whether she could do it or not lawfully, and how far we must submitt in those cases; her Tenants are good, and will be glad to hold the land, but I shall expect more for it if they do. . . . I thank you for inquiring after the Colleges, and pray for my poor boy."

Sir Verney Cave was duly entered at Balliol in 1722. In the winter of 1723 he is dangerously ill at Stanford with smallpox, but his mother writes that he has got through it and that "Nature has done its own work without medicine".

14 Dec.  
1723.

In 1727 he is attending the Coronation of George II., who was said to like pomp and display as much as his father disliked them, and Sir Verney had secured seats in the Abbey for himself and Penelope, the sister who generally went about with him.

In 1728, the intimate connection between Stanford Hall and Rugby School was renewed by Sir Verney being made a Trustee of the School, as his father had been before him. He is staying at Claydon and other country houses, with his sister Penelope; and Lady Cave, accustomed to her husband's constant letters, has a little motherly regret that she does not know his present address.

During the Christmas holidays, Tommy has been with the vicar to pay some visits.

Dec.  
1729.      “. . . Sir Verney went with him too, and I hear by Tommy since, that he stayed another week in the town and then went to Sir Edward O'Brien's near Euston. I have since heard Sir Ed. has flown, what's become of his visitor I know not, only that he talkt of going to Mr. Cartwright's and Mr. Knightley's, where Penney has been these seven weeks, and came from Em but last Monday, and then there was no news of her Brother. Betty has been much out of order these three or four months, and much wasted, but she is a good deal mended.”

Verney Cave had been the strongest of the four Rugby school-boys and seemed to have the brightest prospects of influence and happiness: and then on 13th September 1734—aged 29—he died.

In the old parish church of Stanford-on-Avon, which contains so many tombs of his ancestors, there is a monument to Sir Verney Cave, erected by his sister Penelope, when she was in a position to afford it. The imposing edifice of black and white marble, in the taste of the eighteenth century, seems a heavy memorial of the young and bright life which it is intended to commemorate.

He was succeeded as Sir Thomas Cave, 5th Baronet, by the little Tommy whose health had so often been a family anxiety, and whose guardian angel had been a milch-ass which accompanied him to Rugby School. He married Elizabeth, daughter of Griffith Davies, M.D., of Birmingham, in 1736. Lady Cave's mother was daughter of Sir John Burgoyne and Constance Lucy of Charlcote, and granddaughter of Sir Ralph's trusted friend, Sir Roger Burgoyne of Sutton and Pottton, Bedfordshire. Sir Thomas Cave represented Leicester in the Parliaments of 1741



and 1762, and well supported the family traditions. He is the ancestor of Lord Bray.

We leave Stanford Hall for a while and return to pick up the threads of Verney affairs.

The Letters have abundantly shown how great a loss John Lord Fermanagh's death must have been to his cousin, Penelope Vickers, and the "Evill Doctor".

She was to have a still greater loss in the death of her husband in 1719; Mr. Vickers having soon followed Sir Thomas.

*Ralph, Lord Fermanagh, to Penelope Vickers, in Sherborne Lane* 6 July  
1719.

"... I thank you for your kind letter and also for the Ring, which you are so kind as to say you will send me. My Wife and I are now with Brother Stone at Brightwell, where we found my Sister pretty well recovered of her late illness. Old Grimes found his daughter again near Northampton in two or three days after she was carried away, she says she is not married tho' some fear she is; the Scotchman has compounded the matter with old Grimes for about 20 or 30 pounds. I am very glad Cousin Vickers was so kind to you in his will, and doubt not but you will perform his desires, and indeed I told him I made no doubt but you would do it, when he spoke to me about it . . . and if I should survive you (which God only knows whether I shall or not), I will do anything you desire that I am capable of doing to serve you, and so I will whilst living. I am highly obliged to Cousin Vickers for his very kind thoughts of me, and as I have always reason to believe Em sincere, so I always shall retain as kind a remembrance of him. . . . I am glad you have got my Cousins Stewkley with you, and hope they will divert your grief, which I think is very necessary; pray give my service to Em and accept the same yourself from all here, which concludes this from, Dr. Cousin, Your affte. Kinsman and humble servant,  
FERMANAGH."

The name of Hinton had for some years dropped out of the correspondence; Mary Young had made good her position as Lady Stewkley. Mrs. Vickers had not forgotten a claim on Sir Hugh Stewkley's estate, which she considered had never been fully paid off.

Sir Hugh Stewkley and the Rev. William Vickers both died in this year of changes, 1719. The widow Lady Stewkley had remained at Hinton, and the birth there of a grandchild gave Mrs. Vickers a favourable occasion to write to her.



31 Mar.  
1720.

*Lady Stewkley, from Hinton, to Mrs. Vickers, in Sherborne Lane,  
near the General Post Office*

"Madam,—You are very obliging in so kindly wishing us joy of our littell boy, which is indeed very welcom to us all, since itt has pleased God to spear his mother's life to us . . . she is at present very weak; the child is well sett together and will not easily be kissed to pieces, tho' he will have a good deal of that for his Aunts are excessivley fond of him. I'm sorry to hear you have had so dull a winter, I am suer it has been the Malincoliest that ever I saw in my life, tho' I have had the comfort of having all my children with me. I wanted one whose loss can never be repered to me in this world. I thank you for your kind regard for your Hinton friends, who I am suer will always have a real value for you.—I am, Madam, your humble servant, MARY STEWKLEY.

The Child was baptised last Sunday, Lord Stanell and Mr. Bromley Godfathers, you may guess at the Godmother, his name is Stewkley."

The correspondence was not quite so friendly when Mrs. Vickers began about her money matters.

20 Sept.  
1720.

*Lady Stewkley, from Hinton, to Mrs. Vickers*

" . . . I do not find I can accuse myself of any disrespect to any of Sir Hugh Stewkley's relations. No, Madam, I have too great a regard to his Deare memory to doe anything like that and shall always be paying the same respect to them, as if he wear still living. How they have, and still do use me, is best known to themselves. . . . I will never doe anything to give them just occasion to use me ill . . . what I find mentioned in his Will I shall justly observe. God has enabled him to make a plentiful provision for his children, which he has don, but for my own part I can hope for no Injoyment in this life. . . . My daughters give you their humble services." The worm turns: "Madam . . . [she writes again] I received yours and will lay it before the Trustees, and whatever is due to you will I verily believe be paid. . . . I am sorry you say Sir Hugh would not deal justly with you, and think you Injure his Memory, for I am suer he was a Just man as ever lifed, therefore I cannot think he could be other ways to you. As for his relations using me Ill, shall saye no more but that it was not his Grandchildren for thay have all of them been very kind and obligeing to me allways; and I cannot saye I ever heard that you sayd anything amis of me, and I forgive those that have. I cannot yet tell what Plenty my daughters will have, but I thank God that his blessing and Sir Hugh Stewkley's kindness I have enough, and

13 Nov.  
1720.

shoud have been contented if it had pleased God I had not had such an undutiful and an ungratfull child, but since it has plesed God to permitt her to be soe I must submitt. I shall allways retain a great respect for you that am your humble servant,

MARY STEWKLEY."

*Lady Stewkley, at Hinton, to Mrs. Vickers*

Mrs. Vickers has written again to remind her of the money due to her from Sir Hugh Stewkley.

"I should have answard something soner but for the sickness and death of poor Mrs. Dover, who after one week's illness dyed of a fever. She lived a retired but very good life, I cannot help lamenting her death. . . . I wish I could comply with your desier in paing what you say is due to you from Sir Hugh Stewkley, it being so small a matter that ware it in my power I would not have been asked twice, but that plentifull Estate you sopose Sir Hugh to have left is not at my disposal. I am satisfied that all Sir Hugh's debts will be paid in time but it must be dun in order. . . . My Sis. Henslow and daughters desier ther servis to you, my daughter Stawell presents her servis to you and thanks for the letter she has now received."

8 Mar.  
1722.

*Mrs. Vickers to Lord Fermanagh*

1725.

"All Saints Day . . . . If your sister Verney is still at Cos. Barbors, I fancy she will winter there. I hear Cousin Drake's son is dead of the smallpox at Westminster School, I think he had only but that one, and a daughter. The Bells are ringing this two days at Tatnum, my Lord Coleraine being returned from France, and his Tenants went to meet him at Wollage, where he landed, the Ringers had ten guineys. This day here was a rase run by this doore, one man was to arrive without a saddle for twelve gunys forty miles, and he is to have four hours and a half to do it in, his first set off was by this doore to Shordisch, the next to Warre, which way next I know not, he had a Post Boy to make his way. . . . I have not heard from Stanford but by Mrs. Smyth they are all to come to be in town before Chrismas, and it may be the strong drink that was brued for the Birthday may be for you nephe's wedden day, I sopose the Sargent is to find out a wife for him, and I heare he expresses a world of friendship for the whole family, which is very kind, and I wish he may live to make all easy and happy, and that he may doe so for his Godson Master Tommy. It shows his love for his dead wife to show so much friendship to her relations. I fancy I have tyered you quite out. . . . Your Mother says Pegg Adams is sadly

altered, and stoopes more than any of them, which I think not possible to doe with, but all our Glasses is running out a pase, pretty much alike. I beg I may here ofner from you, ever the chife comfort of my life."

21 Mar.  
1726.

"... I expect at Lady Day to see my Landlord, and shall not be easy till he has bin here. Thank God I have money by mee to pay him. I feare we shall have many words about the Bakhouse but I being a woman hee will hector and storm and sweare, as he dos with all he deales with. . . . I have not heard a word of any of your relations this 6 or 8 weekes, I cannot goe to see any of them while in town and to return back the same day is beyound my strenth, and to lay in town on purpos will be very chargable . . . but if Sir Thomas Cave had bin a Live he woud come sometimes on purpos to see me; I allwayse found him very civell to me. I heare my Lord Treashurs Secretary has taken a hous in this town; the fall of Stocks dayly dispirrits me much. God send our Fleet and Armys may conquer, and I hope they will rise again. . . . I hope your sons are well, I hear you have them for three weeks with your Lordship, and that will be some meashuer of divartion these dull times. I think the late fear is neer Mrs. Lawes who lived with your Mamma, who I hope is not burnt out a second time, she was a good servant and a good natuerd woman."

Mr. Chaloner announces that

"Mrs. Barker was married to the parson's Eldest son; she was married that day Mr. Dormer was buried, for Mr. Busby went in the morning to his neese's weding, and at night come to Mr. Dormer's bureing."

Nothing more is heard of the money claimed from Hinton; perhaps one of the two active widows was satisfied for the present with a promising quarrel about the bakehouse, where she may "hector and storme and sweare" to her heart's content.

Five years later Mrs. Vickers writes to her cousin, Lord Fermanagh. She complains that she has not heard from him, and hardly knows where to address a letter to him.

23 Sept.  
1730.

"... I have gott a house in Bow Street, neare St. Katarans at Number 21, they have all little gardens to Em, and a clene street. Mr. Kinkins could not meet one for my price and conveniency. . . . This is 18 p-d. a yeare that he thought fitt for me to Live in. . . . Mr. Holmes and Mr. Browne had seen it to have their approbations, they bouth liked it, and Mr. Browne sayes he gives it for a dogg hole to it, but he is forst to Live in his Parish, and neer his Church, I am not above a mile of my sisters, but it may hold so bad

as it has this two months. . . . I can no more go to her than where I am; this place has been very damp this six weeks, and has given all sad colds in our limbs, and one of us can hardly go up and down stares, and where I am going is not a great thorowfaire."

The change at Claydon had of course affected Penelope Vickers, but she was not neglected by the new master and his children, indeed it was a saying in the family to encourage a growing baby that she might prove a "second Aunt Penn in size"—babies had always found a comfortable home in her lap.



## CHAPTER XXIV

### CLAYDON TO CHELSEA

THE same difficulties occur in succeeding generations of the Verneys when the husband is in the House of Commons and the wife is at Claydon.

Even in railroad days these were felt as the sittings of the House grew later, and the Members became more keen about their attendance; but when ways were foul, and the roads infested with highwaymen, the hazards of perpetual journeys were great indeed.

Elizabeth, Lady Fermanagh, had to submit to the separations, but she and her husband often took a lodging in town to which they could bring his children, and latterly he had a room at Mr. Smith's, the grocer, which was kept for him, and in which he died.

But when Ralph and Catherine succeeded to Claydon, they had been accustomed to live quietly at Baddow, and Ralph's election to his father's seat at Wendover was not considered by his wife as an unmixed blessing. She was perpetually anxious about her husband's health, and indignant when he had just arrived at Claydon and was summoned to Westminster again; and after a more or less lonely winter at Claydon with her little children, she protested that she had never spent so melancholy a time. Ralph, Lord Fermanagh, had got a seat in the House of Commons, without any exertion of his own, which it had taken his father twelve years of more or less strenuous effort to obtain. This may possibly have led both the husband and wife to value it less. There was a great push being made by the authorities in the House of Commons to ensure the presence of Members, with penalties attached to non-attendance. An important division might come on unexpectedly during the winter session, when the Knights of the Shires had just reached home. The Verneys were, therefore, on the look-out for a modest house in or near London, where they could live while the House of Commons was sitting.

At a time when Greater London as it now exists was a collection of villages separated by green fields; when Belgravia was a marsh famous for snipe and footpads, and the Thames was the ordinary highway to the city, no place was more attractive than Chelsea and its suburb of Little Chelsea. It was famous for its cultivated and refined society, and the many celebrated names connected with the old parish church of St. Luke.

The story of the Church and Parish has been delightfully told by Mr. Randall Davies, F.S.A., in his book on Chelsea Old Church. Since the great days of Sir Thomas More and King Hal, there had perhaps been no more memorable figures at Chelsea than Baldwin Hamey and Sir Hans Sloane. Both were famous doctors, as befitted the Parish where St. Luke was the Patron Saint, and both were benefactors to the Church, to their profession, and to a much wider circle. Both names come into the Verney Letters.

The Palmers were amongst the old dwellers in Chelsea, bound to the Verneys by close ties of relationship and affection. Ralph Palmer, Senr., the father of John Verney's first wife, held Dr. Hamey in the greatest veneration. He was his wife's uncle; and the barrister son, Ralph Palmer, Junr., called one of his boys after him, and wrote his biography and put up a monument to Dr. Hamey, where he is described as "Phil:—Evangelicus—Medicus—Anglus". He also repaired the bell which Dr. Hamey had given to the Parish Church; his father and mother desired to be buried as near as possible to the saintly doctor.

Sir Hans Sloane, P.R.S., a younger and more famous man, was the counsellor and physician of the Court and the cottage; and his friendship was greatly valued (not only in sickness) by the Verneys and Palmers.

Narcissus Luttrell, his wife, and his son, Francis, who was so lengthy a correspondent of the old Fermanaghs, were also settled at Chelsea; and Lord Cheyne, who had been closely associated with the Verneys in Bucks elections, had property there and fine monuments in the Church.

It was then evident that if Ralph and Catherine were to have "a London habitation", Chelsea, already full as it was of friends and relations, would be the most desirable place possible. Houses there were not easily to be had, and Ralph Palmer was busy for several months in looking up any that fell vacant. They had hoped for Sir John Cope's, but that was sold. Mr. Palmer then heard from

24 Mar.  
1720.

Mr. Corsellis of a house next to Mr. Luttrell's for a rent of £20 a year. "I fear tis too small", he wrote, "being but two rooms on the floor, but it has been made very convenient, there are three garrets, a kitchen and wash-house below stairs, a stable for four horses and a room over, and two parlours which are wainscoated, as the rooms above are."

Catherine feels that if they could settle on a really nice house, it might do for her beloved Jack when he married, but that is far ahead, and meanwhile they must not embark on any extravagance.

Another house has come into the market at Chelsea belonging to a Mr. Burchett, and they are greatly hoping to be settled in this house by Michaelmas of this year.

2 June  
1720.

*Lady Fermanagh to her husband, in London*

"My dearest,—I am truly glad you got safe to town and shall be heartily rejoiced to see my Dear Love again. I think that the Stocks, if the subscription opens so high, it is most likely to make it rise, and then I think we had as good stay a little longer before we sell, and that will please me whichever way it is. . . . Bid Joe buye two of the finest lawn bottoms for a sieve that he can get, it is to sifte the fine flower through it; it must be the bigness of the paper across, he need only buy the lawn for we have the old hoop to put it onto."

30 June  
1720.

*Ralph Palmer to Lord Fermanagh*

". . . This is to thank your Lordship for your good company at Chelsea, when you were last in London. I lookt narrowly for you in and about Garraway's Coffee House the next day, was not so lucky as to find you."

Lord Fermanagh is soon in London again. He has another widow to care for in his father's place, who seems to have left her good house in Sherborne Lane.

16 Aug.  
1720.

*Ralph Palmer to Lord Fermanagh*

". . . The news of this place is that my neighbour Mr. Luttrell has been and continues dangerously ill, of a Rheumatism, which has taken away the use of his leggs, they think too his sore leg is bad, for they have kept him in bed for some time. He thinks he will die, it being his climacteric year 63 because his father died in it. . . . [Narcissus Luttrell lived till 1732.] Your sister is in good



health, and sup'd with us last night. My sister Palmer lives now with my cosen Wisdom at his house in Orchard Street, Westminster. Lord Alington has been very ill of a fever, but by Sir John Shadwell's care is now better and intends soon for the Bath, but cannot yet get lodgings. Captain Cope at next door has made a purchase of a very good seat and a little land at Hurst in Berks, at thirty years purchase; there is an Estate of one Harrison, a wild young fellow, but an ancient family there, which it is part of. I beg my humble service to my friends at Steeple Claydon, where I hear Cos. Churchill is very ill; the same to you good Sir, to Mr. Butterfield and his lady."

Ralph Palmer corresponds with Lord Fermanagh about the planting of trees. He sends him "36 Norway Pines and Yews for a Hedge of 38 yards long. They are to be laid along the Walk just as they should be planted", and he gives careful directions about the amount of water and the quality of the soil. "When they are once settled they should not be watered again during the winter." The last trees he planted "were too much drenched at first, for in the cold soil of Claydon no plant bears watering more after once it has taken root. Mr. Palmer sends three of his best Layers of the Burgundy Grape, and which upon a South Wall should produce as delicious Black Grapes as ever we eat."

". . . Your Landlord was here yesterday from Sir Hans Sloan, who is President of the Coll. of Physicians to invite me thither to dinner on St. Luke's Day, when there is a Latin Speech in honour of their Benefactors. It is the first indication that has ever been to any of Dr. Hamey's relations since he died, which was in 1676, so I intend to go."

". . . I have received your Lordship's and will do as you direct as soon as we are a little come to our healths and senses; for my poor Spouse was taken so ill that I thought she would have died and were up all night with her, it was the Hysterick Cholick. I sent for Sir R. B. at 12 at night, but he would not come out of his bed, then I sent for our Apothecary, after that to Dr. Smart of the Hospital, till Dr. Chambn. could come, I by some neighbours' help got her a little better, Sisters Folkes could not be waked. She was very ill again the next day, but by Dr. Chambn's prescriptions I hope I have her safe again. My poor Aunt and I and Hamey have been laid up since with Colds and Coughs at night. I could not forbear sending you, such good friends, some account of this fright."

Lady Fermanagh writes to her husband:



20 Nov.  
1720.

“ . . . Mr. Collman has fallen out with old Spencer and is turning him out of his house. Claxton, a munkey, has run in debt six pound to people a Danbury and pretends that you proteck him from paying it, so Joe told the people he was sure twas no such thing but they said they would come to London to see you to know, so he went to Claxton and scolded at him for his Impudence to make use of your name.”

The neighbours at Baddow are curious to know how Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Verney support their new dignities.

“ . . . The Fitches askt Joe a thousand questions about our living and whether we had a new coach or chariot and what horses, and a vast deal about Sister Stone and how old my brother was, and more than I can write. . . . My Sister’s room has never smoked once. I am sadly dull without you but I hope in God you shall never be another winter apart as long as we both live. Pray if you can possibly learne who Mrs. Anne Baker is going to be married to send me his name and if he be rich. I will send you a Goos and three fowls a Sunday, that you may give to my Aunt, and Mr. Smith, I think the Adamses the fowls, and Smith the Goos, but . . . pray let Joe buy me a thousand of Chestnuts for I love Em exceedingly. The little ones are all well and send their duty, if you can hear by anybody how my father does, let me know.”

Ralph Palmer writes that Colonel Lloyd is dead at Port Mohun, his lady is landed in England, and her child, and he dead in the time of her passage.

Lady Fermanagh is discussing with her husband whether it is worth his while to come down to Claydon for a week with the fatigue of two journeys.

12 Jan.  
1721.

“ . . . I don’t understand what Wallpool’s scheme is, if it is in print pray send it me, and what you hear people ges it may come to. . . . Do you remember what you did with the Parson’s two Fast Sermons; he sent to me for Em and I never had Em. Pray bye me an ounce of Portugall Snuf.”

She recommends being content with Interest at 4 per cent, as safer than the South Sea Bonds.

26 Jan.  
1721.

“For if the books are gon, I fear it will come to nothing at all, but if it should, let us patiently and as Chearfully as we can submitt to what God appoints, and be thankfull for the lives and healths of ourselves and children, . . . I will send Cousen Vickers a turkey and a hare if I can get one. . . . Pray eate your Seed Buns in a morn-

ing, and take great care of yourselfe, that we may live and enjoy one another, which will be a blessing superior to all troubles."

She has sent up a pint of cherry brandy, and desires he will drink a little of it at night, when he is fatigued. "... I'me sadly afraid of dealing any more with the South Sea. . . ." Two pairs of dark grey stockings are needed for little Ralph and a calico dress of Lady Fermanagh's. 29 Jan. 1721.

"... I believe no one here knows of Lady Appleton's death, if you could hear who has her things I shoud be glad to bye Cousin Kitty's picture. . . . I hope to hear you have done something today in the City, what is the price of long annuitys unsubscribed, and I hope ther names will be exposed who have betrayed their country for their private Interest. . . ." 31 Jan. 1721.

"... They are throwing the Stock off the house today, but for pulling down the building I think it had better be left alone till you are at home, and the days are longer, for ther shoud be a great deal of care in taking down the picktures and wanscot, and you know they will blunder, doe what I can. We were invited last night to the Smiths, to supper, Bett's face was so swel'd she coud not goe, so I went by myself in the Chariot and came home this morning between 2 and 3. . . . Ther was the Lowndses, the Woodmouths's, and Mrs. Piles. Mr. Lownds sayd the Duke of Wharton had quareld with Dick Abell, for not voteing as he did about the Directors. I'me sory these two gentlemen's names are in the List, becaus sure it must be a vast disgrace. Send me word what tis thought will be done with the directors and all the news you have." 2 Feb. 1721.

There is a petition from Mr. Turner and Mr. George Caswall to Lord Fermanagh, to look into their accounts with the South Sea Company, for they have lost heavily by it. 4 Feb. 1721.

Lady Fermanagh writes to her husband:

"... Here was Dr. Busby and his wife and children and Sue, last night, I askt Em to stay supper and they refused. The Dr. talkt much of his letters and news peppers, the Duke of Wharton sends Em, and said the D. had sent about the County a thousand Journalls one to every man of the party, that was wrote by Molesworth, by the name of Cato, about the South Sea. They talked of Lord Stanhope for the County, I am glad Lord Cheyne has been with you, for I hope that will be secure." 5 Feb. 1721.

"... I received both my dearest delight's kind letters, and always believe our hearts so well united that they will ever be inseparable, and have no fears in your absence, but the danger of your dear life and health. . . . You see how soon people are taken 9 Feb. 1721.

off by coming out of that House hott. . . . If you have the Black List of the Members that took Bribes, pray send it to me."

14 Feb.  
1721.

". . . When your letter came on Sunday we were at Church, having a funerall sermon for Will Hinton, the post was gon before we came home, and so was the carrier, but I could not write to you. . . . I have just sent the poor their clothing, so intended not to send them any Wheat till Easter, but if you woud have me I will. Jak and Kitty have got colds. . . . I have very little Stomach to my Victuals, but I am now going by Mrs. Butterfields advice to take Hartshorn drink and Cinnamon Water. . . . I'me very glad Mrs. Onslow's house is past her recall."

Catherine repeats her ailments to her husband; she is never happy without him at Claydon.

23 Feb.  
1721.

". . . My old complaint makes me very faint, and has given me great shortness of breath. . . . I don't design to send for ether of the Oxford Doctors, but here is a new doctor come to Buckingham, . . . I like him very well, he has practised this nine year, his name is Cheshire, he was of Balliel Coledge of Oxford, he seems a very civill ingenuous man, so I intend to send for him tomorrow."

5 Mar.  
1721.

Lady Fermanagh writes that the violently sharp weather has been very bad for her, and she is anxious that the calls of the House should be "dropt enough for my dearest to come home without being called back."

14 Mar.  
1721.

". . . The doctor said he woud give me no more physick, so I have dispatcht him, he had seven ginues of me and I gave his man a crown, and I have paid Mr. Turner's bill for all the things that I and the children had so I thank God I've got all of under 10 pd. and I daresay if I had gon to London it would have cost me fivety."

In March she is writing about another house in Chelsea; she supposes that the rooms are lofty and will call for better furniture.

9 Mar.  
1721.

". . . It will cost us a great deal more money and I am afraid we shal get out of South Sea but poorly, and I'me so fearful for our younger children or else I think Sir J. Cope's might be a proper house for Jak hereafter . . . but I think we may very well make shift with Mrs. Onslow's, for when it is Washt and done up a little, I believe it will look very neat and pretty, and then it will lye us in but little money, and I long for the time of our getting into it, and next to St. Mathyas which I always remember as the happiest day of my life, I am perswaded I shall love St. Michael better than all the Saints. . . . I hope they wont get you in to be one for the



County; Mr. Jakman told me brother Stone had sent for Pennock that looks after his estate at Brightwell, and that he had given my father ten pounds to buy mourning for Ly. Appleton."

The negotiations are lengthy; a house of Mr. Burchett's seems the most likely, it "has a little garden and a passage to the King's Road, and a straight way through his yard".

Lady Fermanagh, writing from Claydon, wishes her husband to hold Mr. Burchett to his Articles, and make him do what repairs he agreed to.

"For I would not spend another winter in this place, if I thought I shoud live, which I verily believe I shoud not, for ten times the value of the estate, and tho' my Dearest I long to see you, yet I woud by all means have you stay and finish the purchase either to buy or rent, lest he should devise any more shuffling tricks when you are come away. I'me glad you did not agree to stand for the County, for I'me sure with the servants we have it were enough to break us. . . . Jak is quite well but the Parson is but poorly. 12 Mar. 1721.

"I am glad to find by the latter end of your letter that Burchett is like to come to terms. . . . I love you should send me word how you get home, when the House sits late, pray take great care, when you meet this company that you don't drink much of ther strong wines least it should put you in a fever and be sure never drink any citron water, if they should offer you any, for that woud certainly kill you, that are not used to it. I fear you wear very dirty linnen, for I think it impossible what you caryed can last you tollerably clean. I cant imagin how Joe coud bye such sadd andchovies, had I been ther I woud not have given a grote a pd. for them, they are nothing but bits, and are pot full of lickquor good for nothing, and I ordered Em in stone potts, and he hath put them in pittful gally pots. I will send tonight a wooden bottle to be filld with spirett of wine for the lamp, bid him be sure to get good, and I will also send the ston bottle for some Coach oyl. We shal want about 2 quarts of good Sallyt oyl, if you could hear of some that is very good. Bid Joe send 2 firkins of soap and bid him go to Mr. Perrys and bye a pd. of Shavins of hartshorn, and a pd. of Isinglas that is clear and good and not seeddy when it breaks, the little things may come when you do, but the speritts, oyl and the soap may be sent. Ime sorry you forgott to send the Talloe last week, pray remember it because the Parson wants it much. . . . I think my Dearre we shoud consider a little about your standing for the County, and in refusing it you will disgust the gentlemen, whether we had not better a little straiten our present affaires, than not preserve the interest of the family."



The linen comprised "Six shirts, 9 neckcloths, 2 nightcaps, 1 pair of thred stockings, and a little Gingerbread".

16 Mar.  
1721.

"... Dr. Busby and family was here, he told me they had a meeting at the Sizes to agree whom to set up, the D. of Wharton would not stay, Hampden would stand, they spake of Sir Thomas Lee, Cousin Denton, and several more, they could not agree at any means. . . . I shall remember Saturday to be the happy day of my dear Husband's birth, and pray to God you may live to see a great many of Em, to your own and my greatest comfort, who am, my dearest dear's most faithful and loving wife, C. F."

Ralph Palmer writes:

15 Apr.  
1721.

"... I have not tasted such a Pidgeon since I demolished a couple, when I cam in after you had dined and my good niece was pleased to draw a couple on purpose. I hope your pigeon house will make you great amends for your restitution of it and care and expense about it. Your fine hen turkey proved as good, tho' in the Christmas, Easter, and Whitsun holidays, our penny post comes but once a day, and we have all our letters much later. . . . Mr. Sloan the Drs. nephew has bought Sir John Cope's house (in Chelsea) the Captain and his Lady have not yet left their mother, but will now soon. I spoke to my Glazier, and he will serve your Ldp. at tenpence the foot with the best crown glass, and has promised me to lay by that which is most proper and clearest, as he cutts glass, for use, till you want it. I have found a reason why Burchett shufles so, he is made a Commissioner of the Land Tax, and I believe he has no qualification to act without this freehold."

Later on the glazier declares that Bristol glass is "supplied at tenpence the foot, but that Crown glass is generally dearer".

27 Apr.  
1721.

*Samuel Tufnell, M.P., to Lord F., at Claydon*

"... The House have appointed a very strict Call to be on Monday next, and it was understood that the Defaulters should be called over the same day and the Disposition of the House seems to be to take the Defaulters into Custody; therefore woud by no means advise your Lordship to be absent. On Tuesday next, the House will come to some determination about the 7 millions; which is the thing of the greatest consequence now in hand. There will be a meeting at Mr. Walpole's on Sunday night about it.

Tomorrow the House will go upon Mr. Cragg's Estate, which its generally believed will be brought into the Stock. Wenesday next is appointed for the Directors and Asleby's Bill, which are to be

consolidated and some matters of great importance to the S. Sea then resolv'd on.

The business of the House seems to be just beginning, and every day now is like to afford something of consequence. I want but to be one day in Essex and am afraid shall not find time. My wife joins me in humble service to my Lady."

M. G. Drake, the Member for Amersham, also sends Lord Fermanagh a warning:

"The Call of the House will certainly be on Monday morning, 12 a Clock, and everybody will be taken in Custody that does not attend, so think you had better come up." 29 Apr.  
1721.

Lord Fermanagh went at once up to Westminster, but could not get his usual lodgings, which was an anxiety to his wife. She is sorry "that Stock is so low but we must look to our blessings as well as our misfortunes". He seems to have returned to Claydon after the Division, to Mr. Tufnell's regret. 4 May  
1721.

Samuel Tufnell writes from Westminster:

"... Not seeing your Lordship yesterday at the House, I presume this will find you in the Country. A very few Votes are material at present with respect to the S. Sea affair. Yesterday was carried but by 5, to reserve 2 Millions to the Publick, and I dont doubt but there were 50 or 60 of them vexed to the Soul to carry it. But the hope of Popularity, which I think is intirely mistaken, I suppose prevayled. The Committee are to sit again on Wednesday next, and will go through the whole before their resolutions are reported, I believe this last Resolution will be recovered in the House. Your Lordship's inclinations not to be absent makes me wonder you should lose any Oportunity of being at the House." 13 May  
1721.

Lady Fermanagh writes:

"... My Dearest,—I am now giving Bettsy some more pill, Poor Babe, which she takes with all the willingness in the world, but her stomach is so weak I fear she will never be able to keep a quarter of em; she eates nothing at all and is so weak she is ready to drop down with getting upstairs. I pray God restore her to us. . . . When you see Sister Stone, and they speak of seeing us, you should say that our affairs wont permit of it this summer, because they could not expect us. 13 June  
1721.

Lord Fermanagh is staying at "Mr. Springs a Goldsmith, at the Golden Cup, over against the Star Inn in the Strand", as the question of their house is not yet settled.

Ralph Palmer writes to Lord Fermanagh:

Whitsun  
Eve,  
1721.

"... I hear it to a certainty that your Lordship accepts the next Knighthood of the Shire for Bucks. . . . I hear nothing of Mr. Hampden yet, but I will let you a piece of news, a friend of mine and a member of the House in the County of Southampton was here with his Lady; she was with a very great Lady, perhaps she had sayd truly if she had used a superlative degree, who mentioned your standing and was very sorry for it being a very great Jacobite and your father before you, upon which she fired up prodigiously and did assure her that it was a very false assertion or information that she had received, for though you were a Tory the other was an aspersion, and the reason she had to believe it was from her opinion of me and my being so nearly related to you, her Spouse put in and sayd that he hoped you would have it and keep out a rogue, for whatever they called you he was well convinced you were a very Honest Man, and indeed I think if Honesty ever shines it will be very bright now, and command Veneration wherever it is so."

The "very great Lady" may have been Caroline, then Princess of Wales, who had a keen nose for a Jacobite.

Ralph Palmer has had great trouble with an—

22 July  
1721.

"Untoward affair at Kentish Town, with a Lease Assigned to a rascally Scrivener and he had as bad a solicitor, and unless I will pay forty pounds I must go to law and in law and equity perhaps with such rascalls may spend £500 and worry my life away too with trouble about it into the bargain."

So that even a clever lawyer like Ralph Palmer could not always get his rights, to his infinite vexation. He adds in a postscript:

22 July  
1721.

"... I have spoke to Mr. Burchett and he says by the end of this month his Corn will be in his barns, and then he will set the window-frames on the threshing floors where they will stand dry and safe. . . . Your Lordship's two last letters had been I believe opened, for one came quite open and the last stuck but by a very little bit of wafer, and both had been prickt with a pinn to make it stick, where as yours has bin always sealed with your coat of arms."

There is a love-story, which seems not to have arrived at its proper ending. Thomas Gerrard has been walking up and down a garden terrace on a summer's evening at Claydon with a lady, whose face abides with him in his London chambers; he therefore approaches his former host for leave to begin a formal approach:

12 Aug.  
1721.

"... I intreat of your Lordship is that you would give me one Line of Advice, whether I may write her a letter without offence."



He then details his financial position:

"There isnt a richer single man in Great Britain than myself, nor one that hath more perfectly Attained a state of Independency. . . . I am conscious that I am talking out of my province, I am sure your Lordship hath too much good nature to make a publick Jest either of it or me. . . . My affairs possibly may be like Visions in the Clouds, in which case the greatest favours your Lordship can do me are to consign my Letter to the Flames and the Contents to Oblivion."

In August, Ralph Palmer has much enjoyed a visit to Claydon, and found his boys well.

"My man Tom after I sent him home has behav'd so insolently and idley that I shall be obliged to discharge him, he has set my whole family in an uproar." 24 Aug.  
1721.

*Thomas Gerrard to Lord Fermanagh*

24 Aug.  
1721.

"... I am informed this morning from a Pretty Good Hand that the Great Men above were brought into a better harmony than lately, that a Proclamation will very speedily be out, for the sitting of the Parliament in October, and that the Court hath great assurances the negotiations for a peace in the North will not miscarry. If all which prove true, tis probable that Publick Credit may raise its drooping Head sooner than was expected. . .

You have toucht my Foible my Lord, with such Humanity and Tenderness, that no expressions of Gratitude can sufficiently acknowledge. On your Lordship's advice, however tediously I pass my time, I will desist from my Pursuit till your Lordship and the Lady comes to town, for I must confess to your Lordship I have the strongest Aversion to the formality of Courting a Whole Family.

Not long ago my lord, I lost a Sister, a Woman whose Equal I have not yet Experienced, Sincere, Benevolent, Wise, in whose Company I possessed the World, and yet my Lord, we didn't think alike upon such a point as this. She's dead, and I have since been sorry for it. I have thought a thousand times that relations in general, but Brothers in Particular, in affairs of this nice nature, are the Worst Judges in the World. For my own part, I have determined religiously to give Reason fair play, and follow Nature. These customs of our Country, to which we are so bigoted, this Fantastick Jack A Lanthorn Education, which we so boldly and so blindly follow, seems to me oftener to bewilder us than anything in life.

In a word, my Lord, sooner or later, I will see the Lady, and



talk with her myself. . . . I fear I have been talking foolishly too long, but I have the Witchcraft of the subject that pleads as my excuse, and your Lordship's Former Pardon to encourage my transgression."

Mr. Gerrard seals with a Coat of Arms with many quarterings.

After giving full particulars about the question of an annuity, he concludes with:

9 Sept.  
1721.

"The Quiett Life my Lord, is too much interested in the health of your fair Neighbour not to be solicitous for one Line about that subject, for methinks tis an eternity to Michaelmas. But I dare say no more for the clock strikes twelve and I shall lose both myself and the Post."

31 Aug.  
1721.

Ralph Palmer is writing to Lord Fermanagh about the house he wishes to secure in Chelsea and about a mortgage on Mr. Churchill, whom he thinks "Vulponi all over".

5 Sept.  
1721.

". . . I received your dear Lordship's kind letter, and am very sorry to hear your head is so bad. I have great hopes our air will doe you good. I beseech God to give us all our healths, for without it, this World is nothing.

My little man returned to school yesterday, as cheerfully as he came home. His dear Mamma went with him, after she came home she had another severe fitt of the Cholick; Dr. Chamberlain is not to be had now, so I do all I can to persuade her to let me send for Sir Hans Sloan, for tho' she is still takeing powders and Bristol waters, it must needs wear her away, poor woman. . . . The Boy's cough is better, I hope Brentford air will cure him. . . . I think Sir, you need harbour no doubt of our neighbour's quitting at Michaelmas . . . the place is ready for your windows, and our wayes are mended; they have carried away some dirt before the house, and are laying gravel. . . . My spouse and I have lost a Brother, Peregrine Bertie, that was of the Custom House, he died of the Jaundice; my poor wife can't goe but I shall be fetcht this afternoon to Mark Lane and from thence to attend him to St. Marget's Church, Westminster. He has provided amply for his two sons and a daughter, and done well by my sister. They lived at Low Layton and we have lost a sincere friend and kind relation in him. The Doctors did not find out his distemper, he had all the great ones, and as soon as the Jaundice did appear it hurried him away at once in a trice."

M. G. Drake, M.P., from Shardeloes, writes to Lord Fermanagh at Little Chelsea:

"My Lord,—It being the opinion of most people that the Parliament will soon be dissolved, and hearing that Lord Cobham etc. design us a strong Opposition, I think we should lose no time in concerting our measures. The D. of Wharton, Lord Abingdon and Mr. Fletewood, have thought it proper that we should have a meeting."

8 Nov.  
1721.

Ralph Palmer was desirous to show Hampton Court to Lady Fermanagh "which might have been worth her seeing"; he has "a miserable friend there, Mr. Mariott, who has convulsions and a kind of Lethargick Fitts", he had sent for his lawyer friend to make his will but was too ill to accomplish it.

31 Aug.  
1721.

A month later Mr. Palmer writes again:

". . . A Charitable Office called me hither, that of assisting my infirm friend in making his Will, for which he was unable to before, but very uneasy, but he has recovered his Understanding very well, and now done it to his Mind, and I hope will be the better for it. I will put your sashes in hand and my wife will take care to have them secured as I directed. My plumber was almost killed by a Vapor at the bottom of Mr. Burchett's well, where he went to mend a pipe that was out of order. He was brought up dead, and lay so a long time, but Mrs. Onslow saved his life. I hope your Lordship won't fail being busy on Wednesday night because Mrs. Onslow stayed on purpose for you."

23 Sept.  
1721.

He is anxious about his own wife:

". . . Sir Hans Sloan has been with my spouse, and after a thorough enquiry (of above half an hour's continuance) gives me great hopes he will put a stop to a complication of ailments, that are making ther advances against her precious health, no fewer I think, than Dropsy, Rheumatism, Cholic, Stone and Jaundice. . . . The time now slides away apace, and I doubt not but the happiness of our two families will be much advanced by the approach of St Michael."

9 Sept.  
1721.

At last the happy date arrived when St. Michael was to see them settled in their Chelsea home, but, alas for human hopes, they were invaded by smallpox and a variety of other diseases, and for the next three months Lady Fermanagh was critically ill.

"Dear Sister,—I heartily wish you a safe journey to your new Habitation, and good success in the improvement of your little ones there. I'm sorry I can't tell you I find the Benefit I hoped for from the waters. . . . I'm almost quite disheartened, Dr. Chamberlain was with me last night, and advised me to the Bristol waters

2 Oct.  
1721.

rather than these, so we design to send some home for I may drink them there. Lady Cobham and Lady Littleton lodge just over against us, and Dutchess of Wharton is in the same house where Cousin Lawrence is. The Duke came post on Friday last in order for the Race, which we design to see, our horses being now here. . . . Betty begs you'd accept her humble duty, pray remember me to Kitty, and tell her Betty wonders she has not heard from her since she was at Brightwell. Ime glad to hear the Assembly in Essex does not answer, for I think a disappointment is the Least Punishment some of the company deserve. We hear Sir William Windham has this morning broke his Skull by a fall from his horse a hunting. . . . I am my dear Sister's most affectionate Sister and Servant,  
M. STONE."

24 Dec.  
1721.

Mr. White and Miss Starkey lament their absence from Claydon for Christmas, and thank them for all the good cheer sent them. Miss Starkey is pleased to hear that "Masters are so well, and pleased with their change of life, which I'me sure will make it more easy for yourself and my Lord". She is vexed that Lady Fermanagh's lace is not done, "for this cold weather she says she cannot make good work, she shall have no more than seven shillings the dozen, for that was the bargain, but she says her thred cost more, but I took no notice of itt, and did give her that".

30 Dec.  
1721.

*Henry Paschall to Lord Fermanagh, from Chelmsford*

". . . I yesterday received yours with the melancholly news of my Dear Daughter's dangerous Distemper of the Smallpox. . . . Her being in a place where so good helps are to be had of all sorts, something alleviates my trouble. Nothing will be of greater comfort to me than the sight of her, but talking with Mr. Wall about it he tells me twill be as much as my life is worth, such a journey, were it in my power to do her any real good I should run the hazard of it. I for some time past have had a great cold upon me which with my asthmatick distemper occasions great Uneasiness, and I am advised to move into the Air, and accordingly now and then walk into the fields about home and down into the town, not having been further about once or twice this seven months, so that the greatest service I am capable of doing is my hearty prayers for you all."

4 Jan.  
1722.

A few days later Mrs. Stone is rejoiced to hear that her sister is wholly out of danger. So regardless are they of infection, that Lord Fermanagh had invited Mr. and Mrs. Stone to stay with them at Chelsea, which they declined, owing to the badness of the roads and the shortness of the winter days.



Mr. Paschall writes again:

"... The news of my dear daughter's recovery ought to be esteemed a great blessing to us all. . . . If her eyes amend not quickly, I would advise her to try Mrs. King, Mr. Fitschess's Doctress, who hath done great matters in his case; she useth very safe things, otherwise must have blinded him by this. I am told by an intelligent person that the Lady Joy, who Mrs. King hath her skill from, advised a person to bleed with leeches behind the ears which thing alone cured the party without anything else."

20 Jan.  
1722.

*Sir Hans Sloane, M.D., to Lord Fermanagh*

27 Feb.  
1722.

"Sir,—I just now received your letter and am sorry that I cannot comply with your desire in coming to my Lady Fermanagh presently, but a hoarseness and cough hinders me from being able to venture so late upon any account whatsoever. It is very plain that my Lady should be immediately bled at the arm, to about nine ounces, and two hours after if her lightheadedness continue, she should be blistered. If the colic pains remain . . . she ought to take 20 drops of laudanum. She may drink some Bath waters and wines of Portugall or Madera for her ordinary drink and a Lambi-teve of Syrup of Marshmallows and Oil of Sweet Almonds should be made for her to take a spoonful every six hours, drinking after it a draught of Bath Waters. These are all the things that I foresee necessary and if my Lady's circumstances require it, I will be with my Lady as soon as I can in the morning provided I know it by eight o'clock. I am your most obedient and most humble servant,  
HANS SLOANE."

The physician writes again in a few days, glad to hear of an improvement:

"But if there be an intermitting fever it may be taken care of, if anything happens sooner that requires my attendance, I will as soon as I can wait upon her Ladyship, otherwise I shall not be able sooner to judge what may be a proper method for her Ladyship to be put into."

Mar.  
1722.

The invalid had little chance of recovery as in May,

"My Lady the two Misses, Master Ralph and Kitty Warren are all ill of the measles, but Sir Hans Sloane thinks all in a fair way of doing well again."

7 May  
1722.

They found Chelsea the centre of so much good society and so convenient for the education of the children, that by degrees it became more and more their home, and they only spent the three



summer months at Claydon; not that Ralph, Lord Fermanagh, neglected the business of his estate; though not strong in health, he had the same good business ability and love of detail which had distinguished his father, and not a thatch was mended or a tree lopped at Claydon without his knowledge and consent. He writes to Mr. Chaloner:

27 Feb.  
1722.

"... I think you had better come to Chelsea and bring the money with you, since you don't think it safe to leave it at Claydon, while you goe to Waseing. . . . You must make the Cooper take the Mashing Tub to pieces in the Brew House, and put it together again, but see him doe it, or else he will make it less than it was which must not be, and he will put rushes under the hoop, if you dont watch him, to fill Em out, I believe we must put in one new stave to keep it to the bigness it now is, I am your Loveing Friend,  
F."

"... I see that you made interest rightly for Mr. Drake and Sir Thomas Lee, Lord Cheyne told me where you can get but one vote it must be for Mr. Drake, tho' all indeavours must be used to get the other for Sir Tho. Lee. Hampden has declined, and surely Mr. Dormer will do so too, for tis in vain for him to stand at Chesham, where there is near 300 are mightily well inclined for Mr. D. and Sir D. L., and so is almost all the Chiltern, they will carry it by a vast majority if opposed, but I cant think Mr. Dormer will stand it. I cant imagine how so many groundless reports gets about the country yet tis always so at such times. . . . My wife would have a turkey and three fowls, dead, sent by the carrier. I hear Sir John Whitterwrong's is to be sold, could you hear of what value it is, for if it is not too big, I would buy it."

Lord Fermanagh is getting some pictures up from Claydon for his house at Chelsea:

Apr.  
1722.

"They lye in the best staircase, direct them upon the case, because if you drive nails into it you may hurt the pictures, my wife would have the little picture that stands upon the chest of draws in my father's chamber."

17 Apr.  
1722.

"... I believe the Pidgeons should be fed a days, for these that are come are very poor, and this is reckoned a hard time for Pidgeons. . . . I dont believe this King touches any for the Evil and if Oliver come I daresay it cant be done."

12 May  
1722.

Miss Isted writes to Mrs. Stone, telling her of much illness in their family house, and condoling with her that Lady Fermanagh has such a sick family. "We return you and good Mr. Stone ten thousand thanks for your kind invitation to Brightwell."

*Samuel Tufnell, at Bow Street, to Lord Fermanagh, at  
Little Chelsea*

4 Feb.  
1723.

"My Lord,—I am obliged to your Lordship for speaking to Mr. Burchett about Sir John Williams' Estate, I was in hopes of having his assistance to prove that the Estate was offered at 18 years purchase, if the Fact was so, which would be material, but that must have been before the South Sea time.

I am very sorry to hear you have a cold fallen into your eyes. I have a strong fancy Dr. Johnson could be of service to you, for I think his particular excellence is, in rectifying disorders of the Blood. My legg is in fair way to doe well.

Last night one Monsr. Feillet, a Bonesetter, a Frenchman living in St. Andrew's near the Seven Dials, was here. He says one of the bones of my left hand is out of its place, and that I shall lose the Use of my Hand if not taken care of, I want to be satisfied about his Character, I am told he has lately done pretty considerable cures upon my Lady Carlisle, Lord Grafton, and Sir William Thomson, when the Suregeons could do them no service."

Some years previously, John, Lord Fermanagh, had written to recommend his Steward's son, who was wishing to enter the Royal Navy. The boy had justified the interest taken in him.

*E. Chaloner to Mr. Charles Chaloner, at Claydon*

8 Apr.  
1723.

"His Majesty's Ship the *Swallow*.

Dear Brother,—This comes to acquaint you that we are arrived safely to St. Hellens near to Portsmouth, I took an opportunity some time ago to write to my Lord by a marchant Ship that left our Fleet, how that I was made a Lieutenant above sixteen months agone, and am the first Lt. on Board the *Swallow*, which I desire you will please to communicate to his Lordship, and humbly beg his Interest of being confirmed as Lieutenant by the Lords Commissrs. of the Admiralty, and beg you'll favour me with a Line to letts know how you and all your friends does."

H.M.S. *Swallow* had a friendly sound at Claydon, she was one of the ships that had attended the opening of the Lighthouse and was figured in the picture Col. Lovett had given.

Sir Verney Cave writes to Lord Fermanagh from Oxford, in July, but without any mention of the College he belongs to. He thanks him "for all the favours I received from you, when I was last in town. . . . I hope my Lady is well, as also Master Verney and Master Ralph, and my two little she-playfellows." 6 July 1723.

3 Aug.  
1723. Ralph was ill at Chelsea just as his sister Katherine was recovering, "being seized with the same distemper though of a worser sort", apparently measles.

3 Oct.  
1723. Daniel Baker is collecting beech mast at Penn, to send to Claydon; he deplores that "many extravagant Persons make such vast falls of timber and such utter destitution among their woods, that in time we shall have but little or none left in the Kingdom". He rejoices that this is not the case at Claydon, but he is not sure how far beech-trees will answer in that soil. "Beech mast has been very Plentifull this year in these parts, and great quantities are promised to the seedsmen in town."

Lord and Lady Fermanagh are pressing her father Henry Paschall to visit them at Chelsea. He replies that:

30 Oct.  
1723. "Nothing could be a greater pleasure to me than yours, my Daughter's and pretty Grandchildren's Company, but I seldom stirr out further this winter time than just down to the clock and back. I am informed that my daughter's eyes are very weak still, therefore would advise her not to tamper with every quack or pretender, but be directed by the most skillfull. Please tell her that Vand-vord, as things now are, will not be capable of furnishing any Brandy, there being so strict a watch set on the river."

Mr. Thomas Isted writes from St. John's Square to Lord Fermanagh:

5 Nov.  
1724. "Sir Hans Sloane had sent me some of the Jesuit's wine (which I think very excellent in its kind) and that your Lordship was pleased to like, when I had the honour to see you here lately. I have sent a dozen pint bottles of it which I beg you will accept of. The Wine comeing out of Africa will require to be kept warm in your Lordship's vaults."

30 Sept.  
1728.

*Mrs. Vickers to Lord Fermanagh*

"... Sir Jeremy Pembroke brooke his Thy about three weeks since, but like to doe very well; Mr. Nightingale is gon to the Bath [this was probably a relation of 'Mr Nightingale, the great factor at Aleppo' mentioned in John Verney's letters of 1663]. I heare your Mamma has bin very ill, and sends my sister Bell word, if she does not grow better she will come to London in a little time. ... This morning there stood a man in the Pillory for deare stealing."

26 Nov.  
1724.

Richard Abel writes from East Claydon that he has sprained his leg and ankle in such a violent manner that he is confined to his room and cannot possibly attend the service of the House; he asks



his neighbour Lord Fermanagh to excuse him at the next call in the House.

Mr. Chaloner writes:

"I gave my Lady's Service to Mrs. Butterfield with her Ladyship's thanks for the botle of Surup of Violets, and she was mightily pleased with my Lady's Essteme." 28 Mar. 1725.

Lord Fermanagh desires Mr. Chaloner to sow the beech mast "three rows upon a bed as you sow peas, but rather shallower, and what is over may be sowed in the gooseberry garden, and the rest on each side of the new walk by the cedar pond, and all along the pales; those sown in beds must be trod down the ground as you do peas". 2 Mar. 1725.

During that spring of 1725, there was a disastrous fire at Buckingham. Lord Fermanagh's Middle Claydon tenants collected "seven pounds three shillings for their distressed neighbours, to which the Rector contributed two guineas."

Mrs. Chaloner sends up some mushrooms to Chelsea, the last that can be got at present. Mr. Chaloner relates that:

"Mr. Abell hath some gentlemen at his house, and they layd a waiger that Mr. Abell's coachman could not draw a Chaise with two gentlemen in it from his house at East Claydon to the Bell in Winslow; and last night he tryed his strength, he was to doe it in four houres, but he did it in less, the gentlemen said they woud not Expose themselves in Winslow Street, so they agreed that three hundred waite should be putt into the Chaise in lieu of their own waite which was accordingly done at Winslow town's ende." 2 Aug. 1726.

Chaloner sends up to Chelsea "6 peaches, thirty seven Necktorens, & carots & cowcumbers, horse radish, 12 plumms, two Summer Bon Cretin Peares, and a few bunches of Grapes". 9 Aug. 1726.

". . . On Thursday last Mr. White of Steeple Claydon [the Vicar] received a letter out of the Bister bagg, wherein it says that in case Josph Inns of Steeple Claydon Ale house, is not put down from Selling of Ale forthwith, they wold fire the town of Steeple Claydon. Their reason is that five Dealers called there sume time agon and dranck till they was much in Beare, and then the wife of Inns desired Em to go to bed, which they did, and after they had bin abed sume time, the woman went up to Em and desired Em to rise and goe away, for if her husband came and found Em in the house he wold kill Em all. Upon which the woman showed Em to the next town, and after the woman was gon they found their pocketts had bin pickt of all their money, and the men say they may have it in



their choise either to putt down the Ale house or have the towne burnt downe.

Steeple Claydon people have bin at Jos Inns to inquire about it, Inns says that they never had any such five men lodged at ther house in ther lives, nor no nothing about all of it, but ther was a man and a woman came to ther house, which lodged ther a night with an Ass. And the two quariled, and the man sold his wife to another man—and Jos. Inns seems to encurridge the man not to have his wife again after she was sold—and that woman thretned to be revenged upon that house, which the townspeople think might be the occation of this letter being sent."

5 Mar.  
1730.

Mrs. Starkey writes to Lady Fermanagh that she is lonely at Steeple Claydon, many of their old friends being dead. Her brother, Mr. White, the Vicar, is in good health:

"Mrs. Verney [Betty V.] is still at Adderbury but I expect her as soon as the wayes are a little better, they are allways passable through London. Mrs. Busby design'd for the town and Mrs. Abel talked of it in a very little time. Mrs. B. Able has bought her house in town larger than her other and Mr. Able will be with her when in town."

11 Oct.  
1726.

*Charles Chaloner to Lord F.*

". . . The deerstealers was at Mrs. Pigot's park about half an hour after twelve at night and slipt there dogs at the deare, and the keeper's man was pretty near and shot at the dog, and tooke the dog, and the man made up to the house, and the roughs after him, but could not catch him, and when they found they could not make him lett the dog goe, they shot twice at him but missed him that he had no hurt."

There is a long story about money and bank bills stolen from the carrier. The thief was caught and the bank bills found quilted into his coat.

18 Oct.  
1726.

". . . The Parish hath mended the Quicksand place at Addington Bridge, with stones and gravell."

27 Oct.  
1726.

". . . Last Tuesday there was a great Match of Duck Hunting, at Mr. Abell's, and the two Miss Busbys was there, and stayed all night, and said that the warters was out so that they could not return; and yesterday Mr. Abell's Coach and Mrs. Busby's Coach went from Mr. Abell's to wait on Mrs. Verney at Steeple Claydon, for they expected Mrs. Verney would leave Claydon today."

30 Oct.  
1726.

". . . The great dog has killed the spaniell dog Master Verney left at Claydon; young Mr. Butterfield was out upon the ramble

last week. I suppose most of his time was spent at Mr. Abell's, which gives old Mr. Butterfield and his wife a great penance, Mrs. Abell's Coach called at Mr. Butterfield's as she went by and old Mrs. Butterfield asked Mrs. Abell how her son did and whether he was at their house, and Mrs. Abell told her that her son was very well but he had married a wife and could not come; Mrs. Butterfield told her that he was of age to take care of himselfe now."

"... I received a letter from my brother Edward riding at the Essex Coast ... he gives an account that the fleet lay at Revell about four months and was not suffered to go on shore but she lay at Danzich eleven days, where they was entertained by the King of Poland's son-in-law, with balls and plays." 8 Nov. 1726.

"... I went up with the Church Warden to see what we could doe with Ann Hicks to bring her to work, but she is as crase as she is crooked in body and says for her part she cannot work nor wont work—wee thretnd her all we could by telling her she might be sent to the House of Correction, when there to be whipt so many times a day and be made to work, or elce those Stripes would come so much the heavyor—we told her that if she should but yerne but one shilling a week at present towards her Livelihood the Parish would be contented; but at last I told her I would send her very immediately with a horse and cart to Aylesbury, and then she began to whine and tooke her pillow, but what lase she will make I cannot tell, but she is able to work as everybody sayes. 39 yards of linseywoolley is brought in today and he reckons 10d. a yard for fulling and printing it, and John Hicks hath 31 yards more to go to the fuller." 22 Nov. 1726.

"... Mr. Butterfield's wife's brother died last week at Dinton, by whose death she loses twenty-six pound a yeare clear money. Mr. Kingford, one of the Ministers of Wassdon, died last week by whose death there is a liveing about six score pound a yeare vacant, and in the gift of the Dutchess of Marlborough ... The wet upon the Rough came in in four places in the matted Galery, and att the Galery chamber door and at my Lady's chamber." 22 Nov. 1726.

"... Joseph Bates hath cut the elms in the yard by the great barn fann fashion, and so are the Limes against the Alms House Rales, I don't no whether your Honour will be pleased to have those Crabb Tree stocks grafted with those Grafts from the Apples which are called my Lord's Apples, here was two young ducks lost out of the pond, either stole or carried off by vermin." 15 Nov. 1726.

The Dowager Lady Fermanagh writes to Lord Fermanagh at Chelsea.

"My Lord,—I write this to send by Mr. Lovett to tell your Lordship that there is a good mortgage if you have 12 or 14 hundred 16 Nov. 1726.

pounds to put out, the estate is in Essex, and your Lordship can't mislike it, I was willing you should have it first as if you don't like of it, then I am to tell Mrs. Catherine Herbert . . . and another thing I was willing your Lordship should know is that Mrs. Millbourn has a paire of gueldings for a Coach to be disposed of, which I believe would be worth your seeing. I am so ill that I fear you can't read it, with my sincere service to my Lady, I am, my Lord, your Afft. to command.

E. FERMANAGH.

I beg of my Service to all in Generall."

5 Dec.  
1726.

Lord Fermanagh is summoned to a meeting at Mr. Conyer's house, the Sign of the Queen's Arms, near the Ferry in Fulham, to consider "the building a Bridge across the River of Thames from Fulham to Putney". Signed by John Eden.

Lord Fermanagh writes to Mr. Chaloner:

13 Dec.  
1726.

" . . . I met your Brother Edward yesterday at my Mother's, he said he should go today into the country for eleven days on horseback, to Drayton or perhaps to Mrs. Jordan's. . . . My wife would have two large pots such as Mrs. Chaloner used to buy to pot meat in, bought and filled with potted meat, made of the Bull, and let her buy what spice is wanted, and my wife would have a large piece dried as it used to be. I send down two dozen of bottles, that dozen which is sealed is Brandy for yourself, and the other dozen is wine for Mr. Butterfield, which send to him with our service, there is a parcel of plums and sugar, and a dozen of lemons for Mrs. Chaloner."

4 Sept.  
1727.

*Rev. Wm. Butterfield to Lord Fermanagh*

"My Lord,—Though you have received accounts of our Election from other hands, yet I cannot help acquainting you with my own observations and my conduct in particular. I had notice of no other persons standing, besides Sir Wm. Stanhope and Mr. Gore, till the evening before; and your Lordship being unconcerned for any party, and besides my dear Wife coming from the Carnarvon family, at Ethrop, and we having receiv'd more than our wonted favours from Sir William lately, and his father, I thought I could not express my gratitude in a more proper way than by a tender of my Vote and small Interest. The meantime my Lady Dowager F. solicited here by her Coachman for Mr. Gore; but being pre-engaged for Sir William suspecting that the two Interests might interfere, I suspended; and it being afterwards notified that Mr. Hampden stood, and that the same Interest was made for Sir Wm. as for him, I therefore declined Gore. Since the Election I have had some particulars of Mr. H.'s character, which are shocking; but



before, the main objection against him was his making up of the publick money in the South Sea, which I looked on rather as rash and indiscreet than a designed fraud. . . . Mr. H. was unresolved till the Country being in distress for a proper person to set up against the Compromise, declared for him without his knowledge. The Populous never were so mutinous and exasperated against the great Mr. Drake, and they apprehended the chief promotor of the Compromise, and against the rights of the freeholders, so that many Toryes joined with the Wiggs for Stanhope and Hampden."

" . . . Looking over the Prints you are so kind as to send weekly, 5 Nov. 1729.  
I found an account of the Death of Dr. Wagstaff's Widow, her death makes room for his Creditors to be redressed, your Lordship will no doubt be willing to use your endeavours on behalf of the Parish. Next to your care of publick affairs I cannot omit my thanks for the friendly concern you expressed on our desperate affairs and for your letter in that respect to Mrs. L. tho' we have heard nothing yet from her. To complete this Scribble with melancholy particulars our Neighbour Mr. Duncan, has had the greatest of disappointments, in the Loss of his son and heir, who was buried at E. Claydon, where has been this year the greatest mortality that ever was known there since there has been a Parish Register. This very day the nineteenth person has died since March last. I have now set up the Marble for my father, and it is indeed more than right that I should return your Lordship the money for the charge of it. Mine and my sisters' humble duty and respects wait on your good Lady and all your fireside."

Lady Cave writes to her brother from Stanford, wishing to hear of a lodging in London, and if he knows of anything near his house, Cousin Adams would take the trouble of inspecting it and letting her know.

"I hear my Mother is blow'd out of her house, and sheltered in a 8 Dec. 1729.  
near Harbour; if she finds it commodious or intended ever to change in that Port, sure now will be time of settling in it."

Ralph Palmer writes from Windsor Castle, though it does not appear whom he is staying with there:

"My dear Lord,—My son and I are both got safe to our Journey's end; we could not have had finer weather for travelling, nor ever was a finer season for the country known. The plows were all going in the fields and what corn is up looks well, and the grass verdant. . . . There is nothing new here, but that I saw abundance of coach-horses goe thro this place from Redding Fair, all long loose horses, and some few indifferent saddle nags; and that the wooden



bridge which was over the ditch being blown by a storm of wind was quite taken away, much I think to the advantage of the place."

John Stone, from Brightwell, thanks for a kind parcell of Smelts from Chelsea:

25 Apr.  
1732.

"They proved as fresh and good as ever were ate. . . . I heard at Bycot, where I was summoned aboutt the Hasley Charity, that my Lord and Lady Abbingdon would set out about the eighth of next month for my Lady's seat in Dorsetshire. I hope they make the Bath because I think the increase of my lord's paralytic disorder in his head and hands require it."

Francis Luttrell announces the death of his father, the Diarist, in somewhat quaint terms:

1 July  
1732.

My Lord,—That my father is dead and some preparations making for his funeral must be things known to your lordship, who hath been pleased times without number to send your Servants to enquire after his welfare . . . and therefore I take the liberty to challenge you for an Associate to Lord Falmouth as you was upon the like preceeding mournful occasions,—which deplorable scene that it may not happen to display its part under your Lordship's Roof is the sincere wish of your lordship's very humble servant. On Thursday next the other pall-bearers will attend and your lordship and the rest will have proper notice by tickets."

There were close ties of relationship and vicinity between the Verneys and Luttrells, and the value of Narcissus Luttrell's diaries and his collection of manuscripts is undoubted.

Elizabeth Verney, after her father's death, seems to have spent some time at Steeple Claydon before she settled to make herself a home at the Bath. She writes to her brother of travelling down to Aylesbury and going on

11 July  
1732.

"in Mr. Abel's Coach to his house, where I dined and came on in the evening, finding our friends very well and also Mr. Butterfield and his sister, whom I saw at their door as I came by. I have been visited by Mr. Parkhurst and his Lady, and Mrs. Sue Busby and the East Claydon family have been here, so I have not had many days of Retirement; and I hope some of those that are to come will be enliven'd by my hearing from you and of your family's welfare."

Elizabeth writes again when their neighbours are going to the Assembly at Aylesbury, which she fears this year will be "thinn".

9 Aug.  
1732.

"Mrs. Busby gave me the pleasure of seeing Em after their return out of Hampshire and sent their coach to fetch us all to feast

with Em on Venison which was very fine, but their good company was the best entertainment."

"I cannot wish", she writes to her brother, "the neighbourhood too thinn, whilst I am in it, for indeed as many as I am acquainted with are very kind in seeing me often and sending for me to them. Judge Dormer and his Lady and my Cousen Chamberlayne and Miss Hardy have invited me to dine with them; but the greatest piece of news I have heard is that a proposal has been made for your having a Daughter-in-law from the Palace at Lambeth, but as you have been pleas'd to think me worthy of your confidence in some matters of that kind I shall believe it only from yourself, and whensoever or with whomsoever an alliance is accepted I can wish no better than my Nephew may meet his Equal, which I do with all my heart. We are now in the midst of the Claydon Feast, surrounded with good Cheer, of which we should be glad to have you all partakers, and then we should be so of your Company."

3 Oct.  
1732.

Mrs. Vickers writes to Lord Fermanagh to let him know "the chainges in our unfortunate family". She announces the death of a sister without her name. . . . "Other things are too long for my Lame Arms and Bad Eyes for me to write." She is lodging at Gravesend to be out of the way,

"while my house is full of workemen. I fear it will be for six weeks for the painte stinks a long time and I fear it woud make us all Sick. . . . I wish you would send sometime to soe old a relation. I never was backward when time was but cannot now say a word, but conclude your lordship's gratefull humble servant."

24 June  
1734.

The appointment of the living at Wasing is again in question:

"My Lord,—We presume that you are acquainted with the Death of our late Incumbent, the Revd. Mr. Richard Worrel; and understanding that your lordship hath reserved to yourself the Presentation of Wasen, We, whose names are underwritten—your lordship's Ancient Tenants and Inhabitants of the said Parish—do with all humility beseech your lordship to present the said living to the Revd. Anthony Thompson, who is now Chaplin to the Rt. Hon. Earl Warldgrave, now at Paris with him. He is a gentleman of an undoubted Character, and can be handsomely recommended to your lordship and is well known to us from his youth. If your lordship please to grant this favour his Spouse will send for him over. This condescension of your lordship will be for ever acknowledged with the utmost gratitude by your lordship's most obliged and obedient servants,

15 July  
1732.

ROBERT LOVEDAY.

WM. BUTTONS — his marke.

BENJ. BUTTONS.

THOMAS HUMFREY."

Lord Fermanagh hears from Mr. Rid. Coope of another applicant:

23 Aug.  
1732.

"Mr. Morgan woud officiat at Wasing if you had thoughts of him; he is desirous to approve himself to every ones satisfaction in his work; he has a very good sort of a woman for his wife, and several children."

Lord Fermanagh has formed an adventurous plan of taking his beloved eldest son to Paris for a little trip. Ralph was at Cambridge and the Stones were pressing Lady Fermanagh and the two girls to stay at Brightwell in his absence. This pleasant plan was given up, chiefly it appears owing to the expenses of their Essex property, where the repairs of the sea-wall made constant demands on their income. Lord Fermanagh was sometimes inclined to sell his share of the estate. Mr. Stone reminds him

17 Aug.  
1732.

"how Sweet a Place Baddow is; were it mine I should not easily be tempted to part with it, for though 27 years purchase be a pretty good Price yet the fine situation very richly deserves it and more. My wife's partiality for the place makes her against your parting with it; and though hereafter Mr. Verney may choose to live in Bucks it may in due time serve for a residence to another of your family."

4 Dec.  
1732.

Some months later Lord Fermanagh is negotiating with Mr. Houblan for the sale of Baddow. Mrs. Stone sends some Pork to Chelsea on the killing of her hogs and swine and "some snipe shot that very day".

Lord Fermanagh's intimate friendship with Sir Hans Sloane is held to justify his recommending a physician for Christ's Hospital. Thomas Freeman, who does business for him in Essex, writes to him on the subject:

14 Mar.  
1737.

"My Lord,—Doctor Jones of Hatton Garden is indeavouring to succeed Dr. Fullerton, Physician in Christ's Hospital. As the Doctor is a very Ingenious Honest Man I wish your Lordship would favour him so far as to speak to Sir Hans Sloane for his vote and Interest. I daresay the Dr. will deserve it."

17 Nov.  
1733.

Lord Fermanagh appoints Mr. John White, Junr., Nicholas Holton, Benjamin Harding, and William Tame "to take and impound all such Cattle as shall be found in any of the fields or commons of East Claydon cum Bottle, which have no right to feed thereon".

The wild creatures come in for still severer measures. In the East Claydon Parish books payments are made



To William Roades	for 5 foxes, 1 shilling.
To Thomas Scot	for 2 hedgehogs, 8d.
To John Deely	for 2 hedgehogs, 8d.
To John Deely	for 2 doz. sparrows, 8d.
To John Morris	for one polecat, 4d.

A polecat was seen within the last five years on the trunk of a tree in the Church Walk at East Claydon, but it was as rare a visitant as the badger caught here some thirty years ago.

A good deal of building about the house and needful repairs in the villages are reported to Lord Fermanagh by his Steward. It has taken two days' work "a mending Tomes' Mounds at Botolph Claydon". John Whitchurch is fetching brick and lime from Winslow and cleaning out the rubbish "in the Laurel Court". Phillis Bates is paid for three days' work "a weeding the spinney by the swing gate". The Bates family are employed in various capacities—two men in the garden and the women in haymaking—so they seem to be in a better condition than when the men of the family were implicated in deer-stealing. 3 May  
1735.

There is a good deal of work about the Pump-house—bricks are used for "the pillars"—"one day's work mowing the weeds in the Pump-house Pond, and two day's a getting the water and mud from under the Pump-house". The quality of the water is not referred to. Sam Burley is employed for twelve days thatching at Tomes' House, Botolph Claydon, with Ed. Lathbury as his "serving thatcher", but the steward reports, as might have been reported at any time during the ensuing 200 years, that "much more thatching will be required".

There is a vacancy in the living of Steeple Claydon in which Mrs. Starkey is much interested. Lord Fermanagh favours a Mr. Fraser, who seems to be engaged in work for one of the missionary societies, a new branch of the Church's work. Mr. John Keith, writing to Ld. Fermanagh from London, finds—

"that every Missionary of the Society may quit the Society's Mission when he pleases, his Salary ceasing from the time he leaves his parish. Should he indeed quit his Mission and be disappointed, the Society will hardly employ him again, tho' I think in the present Case there is no great danger. I have writ again to Mr. Moore, the Society's Secretary, to acquaint them that such a proposal is being made to Mr. Fraser." 6 Dec.  
1735.

Meanwhile Lord Fermanagh is giving Mr. Fraser a home, as the vicarage is much out of repair. Mr Bonner, curate at Quainton, is 1 Apr.  
1736.



interesting himself about it; he had apparently declined the living, and informs Lord Fermanagh that the churchwardens have agreed with Mr. Halstead of Buckingham to serve the church for the other half-year. The sequestration remains in force till the new incumbent is instituted and inducted.

Mr. Butterfield wishes to remind Lord Fermanagh of his curate, Mr. Bruges:

19 May  
1736.

"... From above 8 years experience of him I believe him to be a man of an unexceptionable character, he is now leaving my Curacy for not above £5 p. an. advancement at Pidlington; we part upon very good terms."

Mrs. Pearce, the widow of the Brigadier Edward, is staying with the Claydon rector.

1 Sept.  
1736.

*Rev. W. Butterfield to Lord F.*

"... Last week I had the pleasure of inducting Mr. Frazer into Steeple Claydon, and this week of enjoying a little of his Company, which induces us to believe he will prove a very agreeable Neighbour."

1 Sept.  
1736.

*Rev. George Fraser, at Claydon, to Lord F., at Chelsea*

"My Lord,—I am now legally and fully possess of the Vicarage of Steeple Claydon, having been instituted by the Bishop of Lincoln on the 23rd. past, and on the 26th. inducted into the Church by Mr. Butterfield, and last Sunday I read the Prayers and Articles as appointed by Law. The Bishop dispatch'd my business very soon, and with his respectful service ordered me to tell your Lordship that he was both pleas'd and agreeably surpris'd at that Act of generous goodness done to me after so uncommon a manner. The Vicarage House being in a ruinous condition, I find great difficulty to find tolerable Lodgings . . . but I hope to find a house rented by Warren near the Church, so that I may free your Lordships house of my cumbrance, where I have been very civilly used by Mrs. Chaloner."

There is a sale at Lord Fortescue's great house at Salden, which has now completely disappeared.

5 Mar.  
1738.

*Lord Fermanagh to Mr. Millward*

"... About Salden wainscott, the Gallery is a vast of quantity if it is high, but if it comes cheap I may dispose of it sometime or other. The Hall I will keep if I buy it for Claydon, since it is so

good. . . I wish I had not done up the dining-room now at Claydon, since what you have bought is better. The wainscot we bought cost but 6d. a yard and a little bought afterwards cost 7d. but that was but sorry Wainscott, so what you have now bought must be cheaper, which inclined me to take such a quantity, otherwise it would be too much. The Fortescue Crest is a Tiger."

"... The Pidgeons that come up are as black as Crows; my wife thinks if their heads were pulled off they would bleed and be better." 8 Apr. 1738.

"... I don't see how Mr. White makes out a title to a manor, but it lies on him to do; I have a grant of mine from King Charles." 18 Apr. 1738.

"... I am sorry there is such a pack of Villainns in the neighbourhood; if such unprovoked Raschalls are not made examples on, ther will be no living . . . the Dove House is to be sure destroyed for this year, however let the door be made up very strong again and put into order." 29 Apr. 1738.

I am glad you bought the Great Parlour and Drawing Room Wanscott for me." [From Salden?]

Mrs. Butterfield writes to Catherine Verney to ask her father to invest £75 for her, if not too small a sum. She says that "the longer she keeps it by her the more it still grows less". 10 May 1738.

Lord Fermanagh complains that his steward's letters "lay by the way; is not the Post Boy at fault, perhaps he forgetts to put the letters he takes to Claydon amongst his other letters". 22 Sept. 1738.

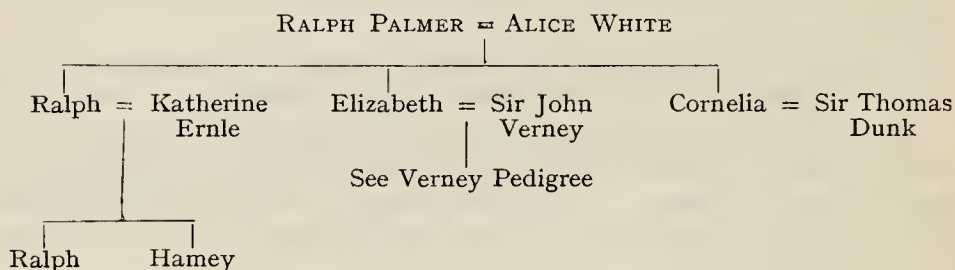
He writes to Mr. Millward:

"... I think Ben Harding acted very wrong and foolishly and soe tell him; the Parson served the Church as long as he was able, but if he has not he had no right to stop his dues, and he must pay his offerings and stop the suit for he is totally in the wrong, but I think you should go to old Parson Green [of East Claydon] and tell him that I think Harding much in the wrong and ordered him to pay his offerings, and thou' he rudely refused the paying of them yet as I took the privy tithes of him only to see him well paid and save him trouble. I think it is a very ungrateful return for him to go and fall upon my tenants without first acquainting me of it. . . . My wife would have Mrs. Chaloner send up some Penny Royal Water next week." 7 Oct. 1738.

Mr. Randall Davies, the historian of Chelsea, has come across a Deed of 1746, by which "Ralph, Earl Verney, purchases from Ralph Palmer of Little Chelsea, eldest son and heir of Ralph Palmer, who was the only son of Ralph Palmer, late of little Chelsea", the house there that the three generations had lived in. . . . Ralph Palmer

the third would be the nephew of Ralph, 1st Earl Verney, and it is delightful that Ralph Verney should have bought the house in which his mother was brought up, and which was the scene of so many charming incidents recorded in his father's letters.

### PALMERS OF LITTLE CHELSEA



## CHAPTER XXV

### "CHARMING MOLLY, SWEET AND FAIR"

WHEN we are first introduced to the Paschall family, in Mrs. Adams' letters, the Squire of Baddow Hall is a widower, Henry Paschall, with two fair daughters, Catherine and Mary, who are co-heiresses of his property and have also expectations from their maternal grandmother, Lady Appleton.

It seems from the letters that the house had accommodation for large parties, both in the summer and at Christmas. There was certainly an extensive garden, and a home farm which Mr. Paschall managed with success. He also took a leading share in County affairs, attended the Bench at Chelmsford, and took his part with other Essex landlords in fighting the encroachments of the sea on the South Coast and at Canvey Island. Mr. Paschall's chief interest was in these matters, but he took his pretty daughters to London for some weeks in the season.

Catherine shared her father's country tastes, and her happy marriage with Ralph Verney made but little difference, as they lived with Mr. Paschall at Baddow, and gradually acquired more land in the neighbourhood. Catherine continued to help her father and her husband in all the business of the estate. Catherine is so used to having her husband at home with her that she is very intolerant of his staying long at Claydon or in London; she writes:

"I long till tomorrow to hear from my only Dear, I am sorry to find you so soon forget the charge I laid upon you to take care of yourself for my sake and your popetts, that you could ever propose to take hack horses at London and ride all night, which I believe veryly woud have killed you. . . . Dick Comyns dined at the Lyon on Friday and told my father that the House had voted out all the freemen that bought ther fredoms. Sir Edward Turner spoke for them and Mr. Harvey woud have been a witnes for the length of time they had been alowed ther, but the House would not let him

18 Apr.  
1715.



speaking. Mr. Buscoeing and my father forgot the other name but tis he that is Secretary at War that spoke with great violence against the freemen, so they voted em out presently. Walpool went out of the House, ther was nothing that night came in dispute but this so they are to have another hearing, but Dick thinks they will turn them both out. Mrs. Mildmay is dead and my Cos. Goodwin at Graces, and Mrs. Burdet's eldest son stabd by Mr. Moore the Bishop of Ely's son.

Pray write to Mr. Baker for twenty Ells of the best frees Scotland that he can afford at five shillings an ell. . . . If your side is not well rub it with a little vinegar and pray don't fret at anything but comfort yourself with the thought of returning to your wife that loves you most entirely and whom nothing can make happy in your absence."

Catherine is anxious he should be at home when Mrs. Isted is to pay them a visit.

The Paschall sisters were deeply attached to each other, but Mary may have felt somewhat left out in the new arrangements. There were hints in the letters that Mistress Paschall was no longer very happy at home. She was fond of society, and her beauty and reputed fortune had brought her many suitors, but she was called in the family the Man-hater, and ten years after Catherine's marriage, "Charming Molly, sweet and fair", was still unwed.

One set of love-letters and verses have been preserved, from the son of a neighbouring squire, J. Collman. He rather fancies himself as a poet; and first sends her a lengthy paraphrase of the 137th Psalm, "By the waters of Babylon we sat down and wept"—quaint words with which to commence a courtship, but he is "attempting the rescue of a psalm from the tyranny of Sternhold and Hopkins". He begins:

While on Euphrates' shady brim  
Our captive limbs reclin'd  
We drop't our tears into the stream  
And swell'd with sighs the wind.

The remaining ten verses seem hardly to rise to the Sternhold-and-Hopkins' level. John Collman apologizes profusely, and says that his father disapproves of his presumption.

22 Nov.  
1717.

"He will be looking upon the Fire; Foolish Boy (will he cry) to risque the good opinion they might possibly have of him . . . but I make no doubt I shall receive your pardon since your good sense will distinguish the design to please from the unhappy Event.

The clocks are just now going to twelve & join to chide me from these unseasonable Lucubrations."

The poet is younger than the lady, and his fortune is not considered adequate to justify his advances, but he is at no loss to plead for himself.

His father had approached Mr. Paschall on the subject, and Mr. Paschall had replied that his daughter "had lately refused a gentleman of a very plentiful Estate and of five and twenty years old, and that it was not likely that she would consent to a proposal from a Person of a fortune much inferior and but just of age."

The lover appeals to his mistress whether his age can make him a less agreeable companion:

"Will my humour be too gay for you, or must the oppinion of an ill-natured world debar me of all my happiness. Give yourself the trouble to enquire into my character, and inform yourself if my conversation has not always been sober and Chearfull within the limits of Virtue. Your person, Madam, is a force to confine any man's affections. The delicacy of your shape, the gracefulness of your Manner, makes every One your Admirer, but the beauties of your temper, the Elegancy of your Mind, have been perfectly irresistable . . . my Education has been Generous, my Temper is easy, some say good, and my humour guilty of no kind of Extravagance but my fondness for you. This indeed is beyond all expression, and believe me is as sincere as it is great. . . . I hope I may expect a declaration as open on your part, if it be in my favour, I am as happy as I can be in this world; If it be against my desires I will submit to my hard fortune, and indeavour to wear off an impression which you forbid me to encourage."

This letter did not produce its desired impression on the lady, and Mr. Collman writes again:

"Madam,—I must, you say, never more think of you but as an Acquaintance; in how languid an expression you would confine the most sincere and impatient affection. Do you feel an extraordinary palpitations upon hearing the name of an Acquaintance? Yet when you are mentioned my heart bounds against my lips. Madam, I have been so unjust to you as to wish your Estate had never been one quarter so large, if my success with you might rise in proportion. . . . Am I (like a second Sir Francis Drake) to blow up this omnipotent reason, this invincible Armada; shall I wish, like Hezekiah, that the Sun may go backwards upon the Dial of Baddow, or like Joshua, call to the Sun to stand still? Or, like a modern poet, call to my own time:

Fly swift, ye hours, ye sluggish minutes, fly!

I believe that I could fairly prove myself upon the brink of Forty since every day in which I have not seen you has been at least a complete year. . . . But you must consider me still as a Person tainted with the bloom and good humour of One and Twenty, I had a great mind to turn Sullen, and die of the Pip; but I imagined again that possibly I might do you some service living. . . . I have resolved never to give you over till you are so hardy as to marry, and then I wish your Husband may love you with as pure a Flame as I do; and so God have mercy upon your soul."

Mr. Collman does not at once give up his quest. He appeals to Mrs. Elizabeth Jakeman, who had been a waiting gentlewoman at Claydon, just before Lord Fermanagh's death, and had transferred herself to the household at Baddow.

*John Collman to Mrs. Jakeman*

"Mrs. Betty,—I blush to give you so frequent a trouble. I owe you a thousand thanks for the good offices you have already done me. I will study to be grate-full. Oh! Assist so sincere an Affection."

7 Jan.  
1718.

*John Collman to Madam Paschall*

"Madam,—That Genteel manner by which you have thrown off an Address so rude and troublesome, soe obliging an answer to an impertinence insufferable, so well bred a concern to retain the good wishes of a Person whose unreasonable desires you could not comply with, has made me so sore ashamed that I sit in my closet by the hour, and blush till I am ready to sink. . . . Ah, Madam, believe me, I had rather grow old with you than injoy all the Gayeties of eternal youth with any Other Woman. . . . Convince me Madam, that I am not worse in your opinion and honour us with your company along with her Ladyship and Mrs. Adams tomorrow morning."

He encloses a poem to "Charming Molly, sweet and fair". A few days later he takes his leave with another effusion:

10 Jan.  
1718.

Well, I am content to be undone,  
Resign'd to wear my chain;  
Since what your radiant Eyes have won  
I'm hopeless to regain.

Mr. Collman's good wishes were fulfilled more quickly and perfectly than he probably desired, as a few months later Molly consented to be the wife of John Stone of Brightwell, near Wallingford; a marriage which proved absolutely happy for the next fourteen years, until his lamented death in 1734.



This alliance brought satisfaction all round; in June 1718 Mistress Paschall is staying with Aunt Adams, and is expected on a visit to Claydon; in October she is referred to as Mrs. Stone.

A new name comes into the letters, that of Isted, a family living in the fine old house of Ecton, who are exchanging hospitality with the Stones at Brightwell, and the two ladies become great friends.

Thomas Isted (*b.* 1677, *d.* 1731) had bought Ecton in 1712. He and his wife, Anne (Rose), had a family of one son and several daughters. The son Ambrose (*b.* 1717, *d.* 1781) was a great friend of John Verney. Mrs. Isted was wealthy and fond of society, and extremely hospitable in her own house. Her girls enjoyed a visit to Brightwell, but Mrs. Isted was always stirring up the more retiring Mrs. Stone to more sociability.

This had led to a friendship with the Verneys, and there is an amusing letter from Lady Fermanagh to her husband, fearing that the hospitality of Claydon will fall short of their entertainment at Brightwell:

"... I hope in God the House will break up at Easter that I may have you at home agane, for the Isteds I think it will be a prodigious expense to have Em come before we have Venison and Fruit, for you know they are great epicures, and till Midsummer here will be little but butcher's meat. For even Chickings there is none yet to be had, and Ducks no bigger than Pidgeons are half a crown apiece, and for desserts if we give em any it will be a great charg, so that we shall entertain Em much worse than we did at Baddow, and they will goe to my Sister's in the prime of everything. . . ." 19 Mar. 1719.

Mr. Isted writes to Lord Fermanagh that

"The great Opposition my Bill has met with in the House of Lords has made us all in a constant hurry, for our whole time has bin taken up in soliciting the lords that are our friends to attend. Yesterday our councell was heard at the Bar of the House and after long debate we got it committed for Saturday next. . . . Its not to be imagined what trouble and vexattion we have had in this affair." 1720 (?).

A few years previously, Mr. Paschall and his son-in-law had given the living of Great Baddow to the Rev. Oliver Pocklington, who became their close friend.

*John Stone, at Brightwell, to Lord Fermanagh*

"... I am glad you found my father Pascall so well and that you have disposed of Baddow living so much to your own and his satis- 31 Dec. 1720.



faction. I have received the Lamentable relation from him of Canvey Island's being overflowed etc. on the 20th. December, thro' a great spring tides being mett with a stroung south-west wind, that forced it all over the banks and walls. The damage must be very great. With as great an advocate as I have been for the sea makes me now so wish we were further off from it. . . . Your Lordships. most affectionate brother and obedt. humbl. servt.,

JOHN STONE."

*John Stone to Lord Fermanagh*

After civilities and cordial invitations to Brightwell, he writes:

23 Nov.  
1721.

"The Land Tax (gone up to the House of Lords) that may be passed by this, and the Malt Tax going on, makes everyone here think we will be quickly sent home, and a new Parliament called. I hear Sir John D'Oyly designs to oppose Sir Robt. Jenkinson and Mr. Parrot, our present Members, who intend to stand again. I shall be glad to hear your opinion if a New Parliament, and whether Lord Cowper's scheme for the retrieving of public credit is anything more than bringing over Prince Frederick."

13 Oct.  
1724.

Mr. Paschall has been to see the condition of the sea-walls, and they would cost so much money to repair that it would be perhaps advisable "to suffer the marsh to go to sea, at Stow Maries, which it was very likely to do the last Spring tide", but if the wall is to be repaired he will get the other landowners to do their share.

23 Oct.  
1724.

After this October gale Mr. Paschall still reports that the marshes are all under water, and that the tenant Cooper is not doing his share of the work. The unhappy man writes "that his farm will now serve for a fishpond, my afflictions and sorrows and losses be so grate I am not able to bear it".

16 Nov.  
1724.

Cooper "has so intimidated a would-be successor by his ill language, tho' he has taken no care of the wall himself", that he is not willing to approach him, but Mr. Paschall believes if he can be handsomely got rid of, it will be to the interest of the estate.

Between the fury of the sea, and the fury of the farmer, the old Squire is in a sorry plight.

There is a correspondence on the death of Mr. Tho. Freeman, who is managing their farms at Baddow. Mr. Paschall recommends a young Freeman, but Mr. Witham is supposed to be favoured by Lady Fermanagh. Mr. Paschall reports that he has

22 May  
1721.

"two faults in him, both which may prove to your prejudice, viz. —his keeping his papers in no order, and the other, his exaction of

Tenants for fees, which latter is a fault in his predecessor; a third may be added, his remissness in making up the Lords' Rolls and the Tenants Copies. I shall not prescribe to you in your choice, having as you know no interest in the matter saving advising you what I would myself do. . . . I wish you fortunate in your choice, be it as it will. My blessing and service to yourself, to my Daughter, and pretty Grandchildren."

Mr. Freeman was eventually appointed.

Henry Paschall writes to Lord Fermanagh about his Essex tenants

"being informed by accident that you are not in so good a state of health as might be wished, I hope you will take the utmost care to preserve it, being of so great consequence to all your Relations. I am sensible you have a great deal upon you and above all begg of you not to put yourself beyond your strength, not haveing a strong constitution, but rather be it some charge extraordinary in the Managery of your affairs. I begg pardon in presuming to advise you. . . . Mr. Pocklington and his wife send their humble services." 1722.

*John Stone, at Brightwell, to Lord F., at Chelsea*

1 Aug.  
1724.

". . . I wish the Melon you applaud was as good as it was large, which was the reason that you was troubled with such a trifle. I also returned your Lordsp. the Canvey Islands decree you left with me. Mr. Stratford of Warwickshire has been long dangerously ill at Oxford, upon his comeing there with his Lady and her Sister to place his Son at St. John's Coledge. Mr. Harry Stratford of Overston brought over this young schollar to dine with us, whose father I hope will quickly be able to return home. These are all my friend Mr. Stratford's relations, and the Overston Gentleman is a very near neighbour of Mr. Isted. Poor Mr. West of Oxford was long layn very ill there for want of a Stomack, is apparently very near his end.

The King's going to Windsor is to receive and entertain the King of Prussia there when he comes. Dr. Boulter, Bishop of Bristol and Dean of Christchurch, is made Primate of Ireland, and is succeeded by one Bradshaw, who I think was made but a year agoe Canon of Christchurch. Thus tis much talkt of the King coming to see Oxford the latter end of next weke."

*John Stone to Lord F.*

11 Oct.  
1724.

"My Name is not on the list of Under-Sheriffs, which was in a great measure owing to your Lordship's speaking to judge Denton in my favour, for which I am very much obliged and for the fine

Claydon Carrot seeds, which I shall be very glad our cold ground don't spoil.

You have heard of Mr. Cheyney's death, his two nephews Inces are his nearest relations and therefore will have I presume the greatest part of his Estate. Frank Hayward is making high Court to Miss Mordaunt, Mr. Tipping of Ewe Elms's Granddaughter, said to be worth £20,000, but I hear another young Gentleman of much less Estate if great care is not taken of her will be a happy man."

12 Nov.  
1724.

*John Stone to Lord Fermanagh*

"... Your Lordship's kind notice of my being first in the Sheriff's list for Oxon and the way to get off is most oblinging. My Brother served it but a little before his death, which makes it more Severe the same Estate should so soon be charged again with it. . . . I am told that after the three are named in the Court of Exchequer it is too late to be got off by any other than a Privy Councillor's speaking to the King . . . and that the Lord Chancellor is the fittest person to be applied to. If your Lordship can find means to acquaint him of the hardship I lie under in this particular, I may very well hope that he will be, as long as he is Chancellor."

There are also some Church difficulties, not all the Essex Clergy having so happy a reputation as the Rector of Great Baddow.

1 Feb.  
1724-5.

*Henry Paschall to Lord Fermanagh*

"... As to what you write about Edge, believe twill be a little difficult to prove the Simony upon him; but however that be I'm of opinion the Bishop if suitably apply'd to will certainly enforce him to reside & which if soe be will put him on new measures towards the East of the parish, as to the plowing less land the Tenants will not I believe approve of. The Bishop was at Mr. Pocklington's on his visitation & then seemed much to keep the Clergy to doing their Dutys in their parishes."

Essex was at that time in the Diocese of London, and the Bishop was probably Edmund Gibson.

Catherine felt after a time that Mr. Paschall ought to be under their roof; the parting with Mr. Pocklington was managed with all friendliness.

2 Aug.  
1726.

*Rev. O. Pocklington to Lord F., at Chelsea*

"I had the favour of your Lordship's letter, and it was a pleasure to my wife and myselfe that we understood that Mr. Paschall bore



his journey so well. . . . We were loath to part with so good a friend and who was allways so easey and quiett in our family; and it would have been with much regret but that we knew that it must be to the mutual satisfaction of your Lordsp.'s family and Mr. Paschall to live together, where nothing will be wanting to make the remainder of his life easy and comfortable."

He is glad to hear that old Mr. Paschall continues in good health, he is sending a Christmas collar of brawn, and reports that "there will be another effort made towards making our river navigable when the gentlemen meet together in Parliament, and that with the consent and approbation of your friend Mr. Tufnell". 29 Dec. 1726.

*John Stone to Lord Fermanagh*

5 Jan. 1725.

"My Lord . . . I waited to see what would ensue upon your going to Parliament, where, though your determinations seem as yet to go on much at the same rate as last year, I shall be glad when you come to answer the full import of His Majesty's speech, you don't find it necessary to put a larger Tax upon Land than 2s. 8d. in the pound, because let Treaties and Alliances be called as the Great Ones please, we have been accustomed to exceed our share of the expense in them, and to find our Allies either unable or unwilling to perform their parts, that nothing less than our keeping to our own way will make it valued by them. My greatest hope is your Sanguine resolves will make the Hot Spurs in Poland consider what they are doing, which if they don't mind and that blows ensue, tis easy to see who will pay the greatest share of the reckoning. . . . You'l have heard I believe of our misfortune at Baddow, where the great floods have beat down 4 or 5 yards of our Garden Wall, because of a grate Mr. Cotterel had put up to stop fish, which could not be forced up in time to prevent this mischief; about £30 damage also was done by a grate tide in Canvey Island last November, where I hope more has not happen'd since, because I have not heard of it. . . . Why our squadron of Men-of-War are making so much hast to equip & get out to Sea, appears not to us here."

*Ambrose Warren to John Stone, at Brightwell*

Sending him a plan and estimate for additions to his house, he adds the news of the day in a postscript:

"No news directly from Wager, but all conclude safe these ten days past. Spies and Deserters from the Camp represent not above 4000. Sinetents, blanketts, ruggs, or two shirts, no fires or flesh, 16 Feb. 1727.



garlick, onions and bread; grand Artillery and Ammunition not come; all but the Queen's Gen. against the Enterprize, which admits of two constructions, one, if successe, then break with Empire for not sending her succors stipulated. Hosier is very ill of a flux, and Wager to go there its talkt. Lord Berkley is whispered Out; a third Augmentation resolved on in Holland. The Occasional Writer of 16 pages 8vo attributed with good grounds to Ld. Bolling Brook, and the reply therto thought to be Sir R. Walpol, has been subject to Political Chat for some days past.

I have been scolding my daughter, who promises to mind and mend by next Return of your Carrier, some of the Napkins it seem had escaped the last wash."

28 Mar.  
1727.

The following month Mr. and Mrs. Stone were summoned to Chelsea by the illness of Mr. Paschall. Mrs. Stone writes to her sister about their kindness while they were together, and wishing "that we had troubled you for another day for indeed the account of my dear father coming to himself after we were gon doubles my affliction and almost overwhelmes me with grief".

25 Mar.  
1727.

A carefully written letter by Ralph Verney, from Brentford, speaks of his grandfather's illness; his master wishes to know when and how he is to return home.

Mr. Pocklington, with whom Mr. Paschall had so long stayed, writes in the deepest concern at the news sent to him by Lord Fermanagh, of the loss of their "deare friend":

29 Mar.  
1727.

"Your Lordship's favour to me and mine was happily cemented by the kind interposition of our dear deceased friend, and although he is gone yet I promise myself from your Lordship's known justice and goodness, that I and mine shall continue to feel the happy influence of your Lordship's favour."

30 Mar.  
1727.

*John Stone to Lord Fermanagh*

"Your Lordship's letter brings the sorrowful account of my father Paschall's death, yet as he came to himself so quickly after we left you, and was so sensible the next morning as to receive the Sacrament, and departed so easily that night without sigh or groan, is matter of comfort to us here. Twas happy Cousin Jack [Paschall] came so opportunely as he did."

31 Mar.  
1727.

Mr. Pocklington writes again, hoping the family will make use of his house as their own if Mr. Paschall is to be buried at Baddow,

as Mrs. Pocklington had often heard him say he would lie by his wife wherever he died.

*Lady Cave to Lord Fermanagh*

7 Apr.  
1727.

"Deare Brother,—I hartily and respectfully condole my Sister yourself and fireside on the great loss of so good a Parent, which I'me sensible is too great an affliction for me to console, but I hope you'll be comforted by each other after the enjoyment of a friend to that Great Age as few arrive to or can expect. I am obliged to you for your kind wishes to my dear boy, whose condition affords very small hopes of the operations and medicines being effectuell, and his pains and fever lingering still upon him, with a bad cough . . . he has drank Asses Milk, twice a day, and it is his best support, but not sufficient to increase or keep his flesh which wastes still, so that he is little but skin and bones, and them tired with lyeing in one posture for a whole month, not being able to lye on either side yet. He gets up every day for three or four hours, and is patient and submissive, which I hope God will bless to his advantage, and hear his and his friends' prayers, of which he is desirous in publick and private. The rest in this family are well, and take their turn of nursing and watching; the Doctor knows not what to think of him."

Mr. Pocklington writes a lamentable account of his ailments, and the exhausting bleedings and blisterings which have only made him worse. He thanks for rings in remembrance of his old friend Mr. Paschall; he has with difficulty preached a sermon at Baddow and read prayers there in the afternoon, but the doctor has forbidden him to undertake to discharge his ministerial functions for fear of a relapse. He has set down names of the poor of Baddow to whom Mr. Paschall's five pounds should be distributed.

27 Apr.  
1727.

There is a bill of £7. 17s. 6d. to the coachmaker, John Bentley, for black varnishing and lining to put Lady Fermanagh's coach into mourning.

28 Apr.  
1727.

After Mr. Paschall's death, his sons-in-law continue to manage their joint concerns in Essex in complete harmony, with Thomas Gray as their man of business.

*Thomas Gray, at Baddow, to Lord Fermanagh, at Chelsea*

5 Oct.  
1727.

". . . Mr. Pocklington has a Curat, which he is to reside in the town, he has taken a house for three years, he has preached at Baddow once, and everyone seems to like him very well. He looks

to be a very good sort of a man, and I hope we shall have a good neighbour of him, I am told that Mr. Pocklington gives him forty pound a yeare."

11 Nov.  
1727.

*Mr. Fytche to Lord Fermanagh*

"My Lord,—Mr. Edge, late Rector of Stow-Maries, in your Lordship's gift, being lately dead, I beg leave to recommend the Bearer, Mr. Francis Thompson; knowing your Lordsp.'s good Inclinations to all good Offices of Charity and Compassion. This poor Gentleman has long laboured under the Difficulties of a large Family, and narrow Fortune, by which the Faculty of a Man of Sound Learning and Capacity have been Crampt and kept under for want of Encouragement. The Situation of this is very Convenient for him, being within 5 or 6 miles of Malden, the place of his habitation, and indeed my Lord I think you cannot do a greater piece of Charity and shall be very glad if I may have the honour of being instrumental in procuring Bread for many Mouths."

16 Nov.  
1727.

Mr. Thomas Gray writes to introduce Mr. Millinton's son, who is a curate at Danbury, who is also applying for the living of Stow-Maries. Mr. Gray has no personal acquaintance with him, "but as he was a Clergyman I did not know how to deny him so small a request. . . . He was three times with me, and would take no denial, so I was forced for quietness' sake, to write him something."

Mr. Gray does not always find looking after Lord Fermanagh's Essex tenants to be an easy job.

8 June  
1728.

*Thomas Gray, from Baddow, to Lord F., at Chelsea*

"... I was glad your Lordship see Mrs. Melless, that you might be something of a judge of her mouthing Bawling discourse, and her unhansome Carriage. I saw Mr. Chillcoat at Danbury, he lay at Mr. Sheckerley's, in order to go to stay the next morning, he desired to wait upon your Honour before you left Chelsea, his parishioners was to meet him as Friday. He seemed to be quite sick of Mrs. Melless, he said he never see the Like of her in his life."

28 July  
1729.

*Thomas Gray to Lord F., at Chelsea*

"... As to Mr. Frost, he is, as he was always, very abuisfull. Next Saturday is the parish meeting, so then it is very Likely we shall heare more of his Clamour, for he is allways very noisey. As to the Curatt, I am told Mr. Hawker has talkt to him, so he seems pretty Quiett; it was Mr. Hawker that I intimated to your



Lordship would acquaint you with his Behaviour: he is a very Buisey, meddling-making, sorrey man, he is made more disturbance in the town than ever any Curatt did before."

"... Mr. Frost was not at the Parish meeting last Saturday, so I hope your honour's letter will make him more quiett for the time to come, which if it should have good effect it will be of great Servis to the whole parish, for I am sure he has been very troublesome. . . . Billington lives at Chelmsford and is a Whipping Man at the house of correction." 6 Aug. 1729.

Mr. Stone's letter foreshadows a very modern grievance: "Wee are under disappointment that Mr. Mead's cook stands for so great wages, for we want one very much." 21 May 1730.

A lady with more modest requirements was engaged, and peace reigned for two years in the Brightwell kitchen. But then came a domestic complication which the sisters trust their husbands to arrange, as they are deeply interested in its solution. Elizabeth Moccon, a cook of undoubted merit, "honest and used to our ways", had left Brightwell so rudely that Mrs. Stone could not ask her to return; but as she confides to her husband, "she discharged her in anger and the cook went off suddenly in her passion". Now the cook has approached Lady Fermanagh, who originally recommended her, and if Lady F. can persuade her to return, without letting her know how much her former mistress desires it, the obligation will be great indeed. Mrs. Stone is the less able to write herself as she has "a humour in one Eye from a Harvest Bug", and she feels her husband will deal with the matter more calmly. 4 Sept. 1732.

*Lord F. to Mrs. Stone, at Brightwell*

15 Aug. 1734.

"Dear Sister,—I give you a great many thanks for the many favours I and my sons lately received at Brightwell, and your great kindness to Ralph, who I hope will be ever sensible of the obligation and behave himself with gratitude as he ought. He has writt his Uncle Palmer to acquaint him with it. . . . My wife and I thank you for the Partridges and Fruit you loaded us home with, we are sorry your arm is in pain, my wife's was so two or three days with a like accident. . . . With all our services to Cousin Adams and Mrs. Jakeman."

Lord Fermanagh sold Baddow Hall in 1736 to Mr. Jacob Houblon of Hallingbury, Mr. Paschall having died some years before, and his daughters having homes of their own.



Mrs. Stone has a bill for bedding:

13 Oct. 1734.	"For a Superfine Flanders bed ticken with bolster and pillows	£3	13	6
	For 54 lbs. of Superfine seasoned swans' feathers to fill it at			
	2s. 3d.		6	1 3
	For 2 packing matts			1 8
	For 3 yards of canvas			2 6
				<hr/>
				£9 18 11
				<hr/>

London.—Received Nov. 20, 1733, the full contents & all demans.  
HENRY PAMPLIN."

3 Nov.  
1734.

*The Hon. Ralph Verney, "at X. Coll., Cambridge", to  
Mrs. Stone*

"Dear Aunt,—I had long proposed to myself the pleasure of jointly paying my respects to you with the family at Claydon, instead of troubling you with this my impertinent Scribble; But the season of the Year coming on, when my Presence was necessary here, it would have been attended with great inconveniences, and therefore I hope you will easily pardon it. Dr. Waugh dyed this week, and Dr. Middleton is talk'd of to succeed in his Bishoprick."

Dr. John Waugh was Bishop of Carlisle, who seems to have been a personal friend. His successor in 1735 was George Fleming.

3 Nov.  
1734.

"... The Masters of Christ and Sidney Colleges were pricked this day for the Vice-Chancellourship, tomorrow comes on the Election. I suppose my Papa etc. are now at Brightwell, pray remember me to them. But before I conclude I must not omitt to return thanks for your late gift, and for the great trouble you have had on my account, especialley since it was in an Affair wherein my future Happiness so nearly depended. Gratitude will for ever oblige me to remember it with the highest Veneration and Respect. . . . My love to Cousin Adams and service to Mrs. Jakeman.—Your most dutiful nephew,  
R. VERNEY."

Lord Fermanagh thanks Mr. and Mrs. Stone during the winter for "a brace of very fine woodcocks and great plenty of Larks, my wife and I give you a great many thanks for Em, but indeed you send us so many good things along that I fear we are perfect plunderers."

17 Dec.  
1734.

The girls are beginning to be old enough to write letters for their mother—the younger one, Catherine, seems to be the most helpful; she writes a long letter to her aunt, Mrs. Stone, that she will re-

ceive a collar of brawn, and thought that she would like to have the recipe for pickling it which her mother had used at Baddow:

"To make the Sousing Drink.

Quart of Malt, and a Quart of Wheat Bran, and a Pound and a Half of Salt, and put Em into two large Pailfulls of Water, and let it Boil about half an hour, and scum it very clean; the Malt and Wheat Bran must be tied up in a bagg that it may not scatter; when tis boiled the full time, take the Malt and Bran out of the Drink, and when tis cold put the Brawn into it."

The brawn duly arrived, and a present of fish, "which eate as fresh as they could at Chelsea".

Lady Fermanagh sends a message by Mr. Millward: "Pray tell Mrs. Chaloner to make two flasks of Syrup of Buckthorn, and pray order Dick Bates to send up a Rush Basket of Walnuts, of the French sort."

Between the Christmas entertainments of 1734 and the following February, an overwhelming sorrow fell upon "Charming Molly" in the loss of her husband. Her heart, that had been so hard to win, was given up to him entirely, and though she continued her generous kindness to her sister's family, the remaining four and a half years of her life were spent in a retirement which her friends tried in vain to break through.

*Mrs. Isted to Mrs. Stone*

9 Feb.  
1735.

". . . I rejoice that you are blessed with so good a friend as Lord Fermanagh to assist you in your cares, but as my dear friend is capable of everything that you will not undertake, I wish you would apply yourself to inspect your own affairs; you that love staying at home a good deal, I hope you go a airing every day, it being absolutely needful to preserve your health."

Mrs. Isted writes from Ecton, and is anxious to persuade Mrs. Stone to

"get the Better of yourself and goe more about and see your friends, when we should hope to see you at Ecton, where you should do just as you please to see Company or not. It is impossible for me to make you a visit till you have been at Ecton. . . . Mrs. Hanbury and her two pretty daughters dined with me; I think them the most agreeable young creatures I ever see." 4 Oct.  
1735.

1 Feb.  
1737.

*Lord Fermanagh to Mrs. Stone*

"... My sister Lovett is removeing to my Sister Cave's. . . . The Bishop of Oxford by a messenger from the King has bin acquainted with the King's intentions of making him Archbishop as soon as the late one is buried. He comes up to kiss the King's hand for it. Conybeare tis thought will have the See of Oxford."

Thomas Secker succeeded to Oxford, and later became Primate.

Archbishop John Potter and his son Thomas had many links with Buckinghamshire. The Primate had been rector of Monk's Risborough, and by the influence of Marlborough he became Regius Professor of Theology, and in 1715 Bishop of Oxford. He was a learned scholar and writer. The son of a linen-draper, he is said to have disinherited his eldest son, John, for a marriage which he considered beneath the dignity of the family. His second son, Thomas, to whom he left great wealth, was secretary to Frederick, Prince of Wales, and later, member for Aylesbury, where he valiantly championed the town against Buckingham as the seat of the Assizes. Thomas Potter was famous for his handsome figure, his wit and eloquence, and his notorious wickedness. His first wife, Miss Manningham, chosen for him by his father, was probably daughter of the London clergyman whose sermons Lady Gardiner so much admired; she was said to have been most unhappy. His second wife, Miss Lowe, with a large fortune, was a neighbour of Mrs. Stone's at Brightwell, and it was probably her father who had given Mrs. Stone so much trouble after her husband's death.

Mrs. Stone's letter to the Archbishop's wife seems to show that both families had been intimate with their Diocesan:

Feb.  
1737.

"Madam,—The just distinction their Majesties have been pleased to show superior learning and Merit in the Choice of a New Archbishop, most agreeably calls me to address your Ladyship with my sincerest wishes of joy. Self-Love indeed obliges me to lament my own great loss, but how unworthy should I be of the noble friendship and repeated favours conferred on me by my Good Lord and your Ladyship (at a time when I most wanted comfort) if I did not rejoice, doubly rejoice, at this additional blessing of Honour and Fortune. I beg leave to subscribe, with all dutiful respects, His Grace my good Lord's and your Ladyship's Most Obligated, Obedient, Humble Servant,  
M. STONE."

Mrs. Potter, who was "supposed to be" a granddaughter of Thomas Venner, the fifth-monarchy man, had a large family. Mrs.



Stone evidently supposed that the wife of the Primate must also have a title.

*Mrs. Mary Wilson, at Mary's Lane, Dublin, to Mrs. Stone* 2 Apr.  
1735.

"Madam,—May I not flatter myself that you will pardon this presumption, I have now lived above 20 long tedious years in Exile, though not without ten thousand anxious wishes to see you once more before I dye. I had some small prospects last Spring but my eldest daughter's marriage took even that poor hope, for the expense was as much as our scanty fortunes would bear . . . which I repine not at except of being deprived of seeing Dear England and my more dear Relations. I read some time ago in the publick news your great loss of Cousin Stone, and then set pen to paper to condole with you but feared to offend where I would do all things to oblige. Mrs. Coghill her husband and daughter, an only child and one of the best fortunes in this kingdom, went to Bath and to oblige the young Lady designed to go to London; they kindly offered to see you and Lady Fermanagh, and had my letters to you both, but Mrs. Coghill was taken ill on the road and died at Marlborough so Miss and her father came straight for Ireland. My brother seldom writes and I seem as much forgot as if the grave concealed me. . . . My past life though full of Idle Childish Folly has yet been perfectly innocent, we have a little together that keeps us clear in the world, but when Divided amongst six it be but small. I propose nothing to myself further than your present esteem and a friend to my children when I am dead. Your humble servant and kinswoman,  
MARY WILSON."

Lord Fermanagh is still full of complicated business, which he is managing for Mrs. Stone during the year 1735. She acknowledges his kindness and the "fine Salmon, Lobster and Flounders received from my Sister's". 20 Mar.  
1735.

*Mrs. Stone to Lord Fermanagh* 14 Apr.  
1735.

She becomes very indignant at the various demands upon her. "I am sorry to find that Wallage has been troubling you; looking over the last accounts between him and Mr. Stone the money was not due, and I doubt not but the fellow he brought about is as great a rogue as himself. . . . I cannot believe but that Mr. Lowe must be mad by fits, for surely such stuff was never wrote, and as to Mr. Isted knowing anything of Mr. Stone's affairs he never did, nor do I know of any writings but what that Brute looked over with your Lordship in the study. Mr. Cooper was here and said the



Monument would be ready so must beg your Lordship will be so good as to send me the Inscription you think proper."

10 Aug.  
1735.

*Mrs. Anne Isted to Lord Fermanagh*

"... I much wonder that Mr. Lowe should be so ungrateful to Mr. Stone as to give his Lady any trouble. . . . I endeavoured to make him sensible how much he was obliged to Mrs. Stone, but some people are not to be set right."

20 Feb.  
1736.

*John Vandevorde, at Canvey Island, to Lord Fermanagh*

"My Lord,—This is to let you know that on Feb. 16 1735–6 we had such an outrageous Tide that overflowed our Walls so much that it was four feet deep upon the Level fields . . . we have writ to the owners to come & consult the charge . . . many of them have but small estates. Our sheep are in general most of em drown'd, & some Bullocks, horses and Colts. I trust to you to acquaint Madam Stone."

21 Apr.  
1735.

*John Paschall, from Sandane, to Mrs. Stone*

"Dear Cousin,—I am sorry for the loss of your Stuard, it must be a great trouble to you. I thank God my little ones are very well, and I have lost no time with them, for they have kept close to their school, and it is Mr. Chilcott's thought Harry is fit now for a later school. At Whitsontide they break up at Felstead for a month. . . . Poor Harry and Jack is speakin of you every day, and saying what good things they had last night, Mrs. Verney and Mrs. Young was at our house a drinking of tea, and desired their sarvice to you."

About  
Sept.  
1736.

*Mrs. Isted to Mrs Stone*

"Mr. Isted being to return to Oxford . . . is very desirous of making you a Visit, you was so condescending as to take so kind a notice of my young foulks that they are all quite charmed with you, and Mr. Isted said he never spent a day more agreeably than att Brightwell."

This refers to her son, Ambrose.

12 Mar.  
1737.

*Lady Fermanagh to Mrs. Stone*

"Dear Sister,—I was most extreamly concerned to hear that Mrs. Jackeman has been so ill and if it is anything of her fitts, and she will take anything of the Drops I had from Mr. Middleton before he was out of order, which did me a great deal of good, I'll send her some with all my heart."

*Lord Fermanagh to Mrs. Stone*

Oct.  
1737.

"... I see old Lowe lately in the Park, and he asked me to see the Bill (about Mr. Stone's affairs) I told him I would have nothing to do with it, who are the parties and what it conveys I know not."

"... Mr. Cranmer of Dean Street sent hither Mr. Lowe's Bill; which is such stuff as never was seen before. ... I think its the best way for yourself, Mrs. Isted, my wife and I, to answer in one Bill which may be sent to Ecton, I think Mr. Blandy may be as well as anyone to put in our answers. ... My wife and I do heartily desire you will oblige us with your company at Chelsea now the flies are all gone, and we are quite private, and then we could settle all the above affairs and consult whom you think most proper to employ. ... I have also inclosed a paper of the mourning for the Queen.

... Mrs. Hill of Wendover is with us."

"Dear Sister,—I was favoured with yours and with the most exceeding sweet and fine Pigg I ever see, and also for the Barberries. ... If they want you to confirm a Lease there can be no harm in it, if Lowe goes through with the Bill which Mrs. Isted speaks of, she and Judge Collins and all of us must answer in the same Bill. Tis what we have long talkt of but I never thout till I see he had employed Counsell, that he would have done it, I have answered already that I know nothing of the matter, and can say no more if he brings twenty Bills."

6 Oct.  
1737.

"I am concerned to think that I forgot to thank you for the great plenty of noble woodcocks you sent us."

8 Dec.  
1737.

*Catherine Verney to Mrs. Stone*

8 Dec.  
1737.

"Dear Aunt,—My Sister has sent your gown down unmade, she thought it was impossible to have it made here to fit you, tis the fashionable couler and I hope you'll like it. The Quilted coat was the hansomest she could get, tis lined with stuff, but there was no such thing to be had as one lined with silk ready made; it cost £2, 12s. 6d, and your gown cost 8s. 6d. pr. yard, and the Pershon 1s. 6d. pr. yard, the man has not don your gloves but they shall be sent. Everybody says it will be a year's mourning, they think the Queen will be buried the 22nd of this month. They say the King is to go to Church of Christmas Day, and to see everybody of New Years Day. ... Mr. Verney Lovett is come from Ireland to Stanford, my Mama has sent a few flouders."

*Lord Fermanagh to Mr. F. R. Blandy, Attorney-at-Law*

4 Feb.  
1739.

"Sir,—I have received a letter from Mr. John Lowe, who desires that all proceedings may be put a stop to."

18 Feb.  
1738.

*Lord Fermanagh to Mrs. Stone*

"... With much difficulty I met with Mr. Blandy, who showed me Mr. Lowe's unaccountably and very ridiculous letter, who in a passion told Mr. Blandy he expected your answer, I own in respect of Kitty I would gladly have dropped it, but since he is so various I think to put in an answer and let him make the most of it, for I believe tis without a precedent."

22 May  
1738.

*Mrs. Isted to Mrs. Stone*

"I wish to give you an account of our good friends at Chelsea; it gave us great pleasure to find my Lord and Lady and the young family so well, and Mr. Verney much improved in his person; he has a great character for sobriety as well as ingenuity which is a vast blessing at his age."

Catherine Verney writes a postscript to her father's letter:

26 May  
1738.

"Mr. Millward,—My Mama desires you will send up the same vessel as went down last week full of syder, if there is any pray send better than the last was, for that was as black as ink, and ther could not a drop of it be used. Try all there is and if there is none better than the last pray don't send any."

29 July  
1738.

Lord Fermanagh and his sister-in-law, Mrs. Stone, are constantly anxious about inundations and encroachments of the sea in their Essex property. He writes to her in the summer of 1738, that most of "the wheat is lost on your farms in Canvey Island, there is not more than enough to seed the Island again, and find bread corn . . . the salt water lay longer there before twas got off than in most other places."

About  
16 July  
1738.

*Rev. Walter Chapman to Madam Stone*

"Honoured Madam,—An unfortunate call to Bath has again deprived me of the satisfaction of paying my respects to you at Brightwell. I have lately lost by a violent fever my youngest and indeed my dearest sister. She was one, Madam, whose agreeable Temper and amiable Qualifications recommended her in a particular Manner to my affections, and I never reflected upon them without secretly applauding my own Happiness. In short, I lov'd her as I did my own life. But since it has pleased the Almighty to take her to himself, I have nothing left me to do, but to improve this seemingly rigid Dispensation to my own advantage and if possible to extract Sweets out of this bitter cup. . . . Your kind



invitation Madam, I intend to embrace as soon as I come to Oxford again."

*Catherine Verney, from Chelsea, to Mrs. Stone*

10 Aug.  
1738.

"... My Mama has sent you Eight China Dishes in a Baskett, by the Carrier, which she hopes you'll like, and desires you'll order whoever goes for the Baskett, to be carefull of it for fear they should break. My Mama sent Eight because there is not like to be any of that size so cheap again a good while. We dined at Clapham last Friday, the little Girl cutt two teeth the Tuesday before, she was a little out of order but she is very well again now. Mr. Nicolson and my Sister V. and my Lady Fitzwalter, my Aunt Cave and At. Lovett, dined here upon the fine venison you were so kind to send; they all sayd twas as good and as fine as coud be Eat, and indeed so was the Mellons; ... As the King was a walking in Kensington Gardens, some people got over the wall, and gave the King a Treasonable Paper, which they obliged him to read, whereupon the King ordered the Guards to go and take up everybody in the Gardens, and to have their names, but before the Guards went out the people were gon off."

In April 1739, Lord and Lady Fermanagh are at Brightwell, as Mrs. Stone is very ill. "Dr. Merrick from Reading and Dr. Lee from London are with her." The learned physicians shook their heads, but they assured her anxious sister that they could find "No distemper but lowness of spirits", and "Bad enough, too", was Lord Fermanagh's comment.

Sir Henry Wotton's lines were true once more:

He first deceased, she for a little tried  
To live without him, liked it not, and died.

Lord Fermanagh remained at Brightwell to superintend the funeral, and in due time wrote her epitaph, as Mrs. Stone had desired he should write her husband's:

Underneath lye the remains of Mary Stone,  
Only wife of the above named John Stone . . .  
She departed this life on the 9th April 1739  
Ætat fifty-five.

She lived fourteen years and six months in perfect amity with her Husband, for whom she never ceased to mourn, and for whose sake she continued a widow till the day of her death. They had one son stillborn, deposited in their vault.



There are many letters from one of the clergy friends of the family, the Rev. Oliver Pocklington, Vicar of Baddow, and in later years Thomas Pocklington, probably his son, writes to Lord Fermanagh about the sale of an advowson.

26 Apr.  
1742.

“My Lord,—I was yesterday favour’d with your Letter, and am Sorry It is not in my Power to help you to the perpetuity after the next presentation of Baddow Living, Mr. Herring who was to have been presented after the death of my father, Having a better Living, has declined accepting of this, & has put it up to Sale, by Mr. Lough an Attorney in the Monument Yard, or Street, & I hear there is £870 bid for the perpetuity, which is a great prize; but who is the bidder I know not, & If I can learn after the presentation, that the perpetuity will be disposed off, I will use my Endeavours to get the Refusal of it for Your Lordship, who am,  
My Lord, Your Lordship’s most obedt. hble. servt.,

THOMAS POCKLINGTON.”

## CHAPTER XXVI

### "THE HONOURABLE JOHN"

As Catherine Verney's first child had been a girl, great were the family rejoicings when John was born, April 30, 1711, in Cecil Street, London.

The good Rector of Claydon hastened "to bear a part" in writing to his father, "in the general congratulations of joy for Mrs. Verney's happy delivery of a son and heir of your Honble. Family which as tis deriv'd from very ancient Projenitors so may it be continued in this Line to latest posterity."

The baby was christened on the 9th of May by Mr. Vickers; gossips, Lord Fermanagh and Ralph Palmer, his grandfathers, and Mary Paschall, afterwards Mrs. Stone. The boy at four years old is not allowed much liberty. Catherine writes to her husband in London:

"... Pray desire Cousen Peg to by me a pair of leading strings for Jak, ther is stuf made on purpose that is very strong for he is so heavy I dare not venture him with a comon ribin." 3 Jan. 1715.

"My dear," Catherine writes, "I am extreem glad to hear your hip is well, and I pray God send you safe and speedily at home, for hear is prodigious want of you. I hear my lord, is so well that he may soon be in town, so I think you may very well tell him the necessity for your being at home. . . . The woman has been hear to see Jak and has given me some streinthen things to give him and hopes he will soon be well. . . . Sister Lovett don't come this week. I have had no letter from her, but hear she intends to leave Miss and Shepherd here when she goes to London, which vexes me beyound expressing." 22 Apr. 1715.

The woman was here agane with Jak, I never let him be a moment out of my sight, so I have been never out since but he has been with me at Church and scolds every day for his Pape to come home."

12 Jan.  
1721.

If Catherine, Lady Fermanagh, had a favourite amongst her four children, it was certainly her eldest son. "The Honourable John" was a delicate boy, and perhaps on this account was not sent to a public school, as were his Cave and Lovett cousins, who were so happy at Rugby. When their parents were settled at Claydon, John and Ralph went to the Rectory for their lessons; but if the kind old Rector spoke to the little boys in the deprecatory and fulsome style of his letters, it was doubtful if he could keep up any discipline. Their mother had her suspicions, and wrote to her husband in London,—“I heard Jak read yesterday, and tis so bad that I believe I shall have another bout very soon.”

She was a good deal alone with her children, while her husband was attending the House of Commons; she was out of spirits, and not strong in health. Claydon could not have been a comfortable winter residence at that time. The exchanging of old lamps for new, and turning comfortable dwelling-houses into mansions “palatial and lightsome”, which was later to cost Claydon so dear, was already coming into fashion, and Catherine’s letters are full of the pulling down of walls and roofs, and the enlargement of offices and out-buildings. The oak wainscoting, and the picturesque, if heavy, Tudor and Stuart furniture, which Mary Lovett so much disliked at Liscombe House, were being replaced in other houses in the County by marble chimney-pieces, painted deal, and spindle-legged tables and chairs.

The sweet, old-fashioned gardens were no longer appreciated. Professional landscape-gardeners were being employed to lay out formal terraces and lawns, and to change the old fish-ponds into “lakes”; so that Claydon, that had seemed so beautiful to Sir Ralph’s generation, was becoming regrettably rustic and old-fashioned. But there was no break in the hospitalities which were being constantly exchanged with the neighbours, in some of which the children were included.

Catherine is still thinking anxiously about their education.

7 Mar.  
1721.

“... I shall want a piece of Holland to make the two boys shirts before we put em out, but I believe I had better desire Nancy Isted to buy it, for what she bought me last was very good. Jak is mighty brisk and well again, so I hope I shall have no further occasion for the Doctor. My great complaint now is a constant pain in my head, which I hoped my blister would have removed, but it has not.”

"... Mr. Butterfield dus teach the children, but indeed I think tis but poorly, for I dont think they improve one bit, and she lives constantly with Mrs. Able (who has lately lost her husband) and has never been one night at home tho' he has bin so ill. I heard Em read constantly while he was so bad. Ralph was so sick on me that I heard him say every morning to Kity when she came to make my fire—"Do you think she'll come down today? If she dus to be sure she'l catch cold"—for when I was above he never came near mee, tho' Jack would sit with me a long time together."

19 Mar.  
1721.

When they next went to London they took John with them.

*Lady Fermanagh, at Claydon, to her Husband, in London*

6 June  
1721.

"... Yesterday we was at the Judge's, wher we met a vast deal of company, the Dutches of Wharton, Mr. and Mrs. Moor, Lady Lee, Mrs. Ingleby, and another Lady. The Duke went yesterday to Mansbury, but is to be at the House of Lords on Thursday. I told the Dutches I intended to wait on her, she was highly civell, shall I go before you come home, or not? ... Jak will have me put in he wont tell me what, but he desires you will remember to doe *that*."

Ralph Palmer writes about his own boy:

"... Ralph goes on very well at Brentford, and always inquires after your Lordship's health. ... Aunt Jennie and his Mamma were with him on Tuesday last."

22 June  
1721.

"... Master Bignel was here to inquire after my son Ralph, and he had promised to be very kind and usefull to Master Verney when he goes to Fulham. He is a very good-natured boy and will be I doubt not very agreeable to him."

27 July  
1721.

"... My son Ralph came home the 19th of this month, he then breaking up for a fortnight. Mr. Vaslett was to pay a visit here, and gives his service to you and my Lady and Master. I had the opportunity of laying strict injunctions upon him as to his care and kindness to him, which he very solemnly promises in all respects when he has the honour of his pupillage. ..."

Aug.  
1721.

There had been great searchings of heart as to where the precious little John should be sent to school, but he was at last entrusted to Mr. Vaslet at Fulham.

By the summer of 1722, John seems to be settled at school.

There is a letter of his to Lord Fermanagh, at Little Chelsea:

"Dear Papy,—I desire You to send for me home on Wednesday Night, for to be at home on thursday for to see the Duke of

8 Aug.  
1722.



Malborough buried & I will be at Mr. Bignell's House in London.  
—I am, Your most Dutiful Son, JOHN VERNEY."

A year later, the rector of Claydon writes to the two schoolboys.

3 Aug.  
1723.

*Rev. W. Butterfield to the Hon. John Verney*

"I am much reviv'd to find by your elegant writing and noble present of tea, that I am not forgotten by my dear Schollar, and shall be much more to see you, which I hope will be at the approaching season of your Breaking-up. If I may judge of your other Improvements by your Handwriting, as of Hercules by his Foot, I must conclude you are an extraordinary Proficient on that small Stock of Letters which was raised here, and I cannot but promise myself that that natural Sweetness of Temper which hitherto discovers itself will, by the Grace of God, continue and grow up to a Habit of Religion, in full Maturity with your Age, to the Comfort of your Parents, your own lasting Good, and the Joy of all your Friends, particularly of your most Endeared Friend and Humble Servant, W. BUTTERFIELD."

26 Sept.  
1723.

*The Honourable John to Lord Fermanagh*

"Dear Papa,—I having such a great desire to know how you & my Dear Mama doe, that I could not forbear writing two or three of my scribbling lines, but I hope you will excuse me. I wish you and my Mama a good journey into the Country & I should have been mity glad to have gon a long with you there, but I wish us a happy meting when we meet again. Pray give my Duty to my Dear Mama, & Service to my Brother & Sisters & everybody else."

Some forms of consolation were occasionally sent to the little boy who would have been "mity glad" to go with his parents to Claydon.

John writes again:

18 Nov.  
1723.

"Dear Papa,—George brought me some Gingerbread which you was so kind as to send me, as also a couple of Handkerchiefs, but we have found the other again in one of my Coat Pockets. I beg the favour of you, if it will not be troublesome, that you will desire my dear Mama to send me a little Tea & Sugar, as also a pair of Battledores & Shittlecock. Pray give my Duty to my Dear Mama, my Service waits upon my Sisters & Cousin.—I remain, Dear Papa, your most dutiful Son, JOHN VERNEY."

Dec.  
1723.

Soon after he announces to his father that the school at Fulham

is breaking up on the 13th December, at night, and he hopes that his father will not forget the date. Mr. Butterfield's extravagant compliments seem hardly justified.

Another little letter comes from John Verney, at Fulham, to his father:

"... I desire you would send me my Sord a Thursday morning, because if any of us go to Chelsey I cannot for want of it; and when you send my Sord if you will send my Phœdrus I shall be obliged to you."

30 Sept.  
1724.

There is a letter, docketed like all the others, by Lord Fermanagh, "From my Good Child, John Verney". He seems to have sent a portrait of his cherished boy to his school at Fulham.

"Dear Papa,—I am very glad that you are well and hope my dear Mamma and both my sisters are in the same good health as I am in. The picture Mr. Vaslet thinks a Master-Piece, as does every one else, and he sends you a thousand thanks for it, and says that though it is a present that he values to the highest degree, yet it can't add anything to the Love he had for me before. I can assure you I strive to fulfill the design you put me here for. . . ."

22 Oct.  
1724.

It was quite the fashion of the day to exchange portraits amongst friends, the painter's name being rarely given, but it must surely have been an unusual proof of a father's partiality to send his son's portrait to a private school.

There are three pictures of the Hon. John Verney at Claydon; one as a little child with his mother, and another in a soft blue satin coat, a very pleasing portrait of a youth in his teens. A first glance at the colour-scheme of this picture suggested to many people that Gainsborough's famous Blue Boy had set the fashion and been widely imitated, but a closer examination of the dates brings out the interesting fact that this picture must have been painted when Gainsborough was still a child, and that this "Master-Piece" was therefore original.

John Verney was entered in due time "as a Nobleman" in Trinity College, Cambridge, when the third portrait was probably painted. It seemed doubtful whether his younger brother was also to go to the University. Ralph Verney's extreme gratitude to his aunt, Mrs. Stone, for her favours shown to him at a critical period of his life, may mean that she helped him with his education. He

was admitted to Christ's College, Cambridge, as "a Gentleman Commoner".

It was in keeping with John's upbringing that he presented the College with a handsome silver tankard on leaving, mentioned in an account of the plate at Trinity College. No such gift was expected from Ralph, who was only an unconsidered younger son.

18 Sept.  
1726.

*Charles Chaloner to Lord F.*

"... Yesterday Goody Taylor brought one dozen yards of Lace for my Lady, which I payd her 18 shillings for. . . . The Arch Deacon was here to visit the Church last Friday evening betwixt six and seven of the clock at night, and he told the Church Warden that he will have a New Church Bible and New Common Prayer Book betwixt this and Easter, but this is what the old Parson putt in his head, for old Mr. Butterfield had me to the Church two days before he came, and showed me the Church Bible and said that there must needs be a new Bible and I asked him why, and he said because the Cover was worne out and when it was last bound in A place or two the Leaves were put in wrong, but I told him those leaves might be put in right now, but then he said the print was so black; but the Arch Deacon says there must be a New Common Prayer Book because of King George being putt into the prayer."

There had been such a quick succession of Sovereigns since the reign of Charles II. that no doubt the corrections in the Royal Prayers had become indecipherable.

18 Sept.  
1726.

"... The Archdeacon laye at Mr. Butterfield's all night, and his Retinue, but Mr. Abell sent down a servant to invite them up to East Claydon."

22 Sept.  
1726.

"... St. James's Post mentions the death of Judge Dormer, there is three of that family gon off very near together. I believe the townspeople will provide the Bible and Common Prayer Book, seeing your Honr. will not oppose it, but Michel Taylor told the Archdeacon that he thought your Lordship would buye a Bible and Common Prayer Book. The Archdeacon said it was very well so that there was but one provided against Easter, but Michel told him that the Parish must not ympose upon your Lordship. I only mention this which was the diologe Michel Taylor and the Arch Deacon had. . . . John Hicly hath thirty yards of Linsiwoolley dun, and the Fuller should have it forthwith, or else it will take damage,



and he desires to no what couler it must be that the man may have it."

Chaloner sends up twenty-one chickens at sixpence apiece, with quinces at fourpence the dozen, walnuts and chestnuts, golden pippins, and ropes of onions. Betty Verney seems to be staying with her cousin, Mrs. Starkey, at Steeple Claydon. 4 Oct. 1726.

"... There hath been great squabbling about the liveing at Ad-dington, Mr. Butterfield told Mrs. Busby that the tenth of that Estate comes to two hundred pounds a yeare, which no person besids himself would take lese, which hath enraigned Mrs. Busby very much, and she says it tis wronging of her children, for it cost as she says five thousand pound inclosing ... one day last week Mr. Southing went to visitation and there stated the case of Adington liveing, and all the Clurgy was for the tenth which is two hundred pounds a yeare, but the Arch Deachon said—No, gentlemen, that cannot be, for as the doctor [Busby] was at a great charge and must be considered, they could not have above an eighth part." 9 Oct. 1726.

Dr. Busby was at a great charge, the Clergy must show some consideration for Mrs. Busby; she could not pay a tenth, and they must be content with an eighth part. Leaving this ecclesiastical riddle to be solved locally, the Archdeacon rode away.

*Lady Cave to Lord Fermanagh*

23 Sept.  
1727.

"We have bin very ill of a fever, which several of my family have had, my Coachman has been useless and unable to drive more than this two months, but the younge folks procured one to drive them two days last week to Rugby Races, after which they Danced both nights till morning, but poor Miss Lovett had her doom and was baulked of the second night's pleasure by the fever overtaking her. We suppose you are all busy in preparing for the sight of the Coronation. ... Verney is the only one hereabouts that goes on purpose so far to see it, and with him Miss Penney; places are to be procured for them. ... I think Verney's business need not detain him long in town and I wish he'd apply to that he has in the Country. Tommy is gone to schoole in pretty good health, and much mended in his shape, his time must not be lost from learning, if possible to help it, and I hope a few indulgences and care will enable him to go thro' it."



12 Oct.  
1727.

*Lord Fermanagh to Mr. Chaloner*

"... The potted eels came by the carrier . . . we were all yesterday to see the Procession at the Coronation, which was very fine. I shall send a plain strong Mare down next week, tis what I ride, for I can't make her stand."

24 June  
1728.

*Daniel Baker, at Cambridge, to Lord F., at Claydon*

"My Lord,—Being now at Cambridge in my way to Blith and having heard that your Lordship's intention is to admit Mr. Verney at this University, but that you have not yet determined on a College and Tutor for Him, I take the liberty . . . to offer my Recommendation. Were I not well assured by what I have observed from my Cousns. Mellishes since I came hither, that they have been so fortunate as to fall under the Direction of a gentleman the most able and willing to do reall Service to Youth, that I ever knew of, I would not be so forward to interfere in an affair of so nice a nature. Their Tutor is Mr. Turney, Fellow of St. Peter's Coll., who has also the care of Sir Hen. Lyddall, a young nobleman of fine Behaviour & great Hopes.

The Acquaintance & Conversation of these gentlemen I presume may be of Advantage to any other that may happen into their Society, and I can answer for Mr. Turner. My Bro. James Baker & the young gentleman—they will approve themselves to your Lordship by their regard to Mr. Verney. I must intreat your Lordship & my Lady Fermanagh to accept my endeavour to do any service to your Family."

*Vennis Alumni Cantabrigienses*

VERNEY, JOHN. Admitted, as nobleman, aged 18, at Trinity Coll., Cambridge, Nov. 19th, 1728. School, Fulham, London, Mr. Vaslett. Matriculated 1729. Married Mary, daughter of Josias Nicholson of Clapham, Surrey. Died V.P. and S.P.M. June 3rd, 1737.

VERNEY, RALPH. Brother of above, later 2nd Earl Verney. Admitted Fellow-Commoner, Christ's Coll., April 30th, 1732. Matriculated 1732. M.A. 1736.

We have no definite details of the preliminary negotiations for the Honourable John's marriage with Mary, daughter of Josias Nicholson of Clapham. A little joke about "My Sister over the water" was a phrase showing the complacency with which aristocratic Chelsea regarded unfashionable Clapham.

There was not, perhaps, much enthusiasm about the new con-



Honble. John Verney.



nection, but Mary Nicholson was welcomed with all due cordiality. They were married at Tooting, in Surrey, 8th July 1736, by Mr. Goodwin, rector of Clapham.

Lady Fermanagh goes into society with her son and his fiancée:

"... We were at the Opera a Saturday, with Mr. Nicholson and his daughter, where we see the Prince and Princess. She is a very agreeable woman and the Prince is very much pleased with her, she is as tall as Miss Verney, and Middle Sized, not fat nor lean, pretty much markt with the Small Pox, and flaxen-coloured hair. She don't speak a word of English, and but a little French, her language is high Dutch. I send you the Newspaper that gives a very true and exact account of the Wedding, and as we none of us went to it, it gives a better description than I am able to do."

April  
1736.

Frederick, Prince of Wales, and the Princess Augusta of Saxe-Gotha had been married a week, and this may have been their first public appearance. It would be interesting to know what opera they heard. The Prince, following and bettering his father's example as an undutiful son, opposed the King in everything. They were fond of music, as befitted their German origin, but when George II. patronised Handel at the Haymarket, the Prince ostentatiously went to hear his Italian rival Buononcini, at Lincoln's Inn Fields. That politics and Court intrigues should uphold or vilify the work of a great musician seems to us preposterous, but so it was. The doggerel of the street was carefully impartial:

Some folks aver that Buononcini,  
Compared to Handel's a mere ninny!  
Others again affirm that Handel  
Is not fitt to hold his candle!  
Strange that such difference should be  
'Twixt Tweedledum and Tweedledee.

The flaxen-haired Princess had little chance of happiness in such a quarrelsome family, but she influenced the course of English history as the mother of George III.

A note which has a pathetic interest, in view of the rapid close of John Verney's young life, was written to his father from Clapham:

"Dearest Papa,—Mr. Nicholson would have me send over this morning to know if you and my Mama, and Brother and Sisters, will please to dine with him tomorrow, we are this moment agaoing to see my Cousin Vickers, so must conclude, with desireing both our duties and services to Brother and Sisters, I am, dear Papa, your most dutyfull and obedient Son to command,

Early  
July  
1736.

JOHN VERNEY."



17 July 1736. The invitation was accepted, and the following week Lady Fermanagh was busy making preparations for entertaining the wedding party at her house. She is anxious to be very hospitable, they "had no ducks at their dinner", and she is anxious that Mrs. Stone should "send her two or three wild ducks, which will be so great a rarity".

19 July 1736. Mrs. Isted writes her congratulations on the marriage, and hopes as "the Lady has so great a character that she will make not only Mr. Verney but the whole family happy".

Elizabeth writes again of her brother John's marriage.

15 July 1736. "Dear Aunt,—The hurry we have been in on account of my brother's wedding makes me hope you will pardon my not sending your things sooner. They saw company for three days, and we were all obliged to be there, and there was a great deal but chiefly her acquaintance. . . . I have only sent one of your Mobbs that if there should be any faults the rest may be amended; my Mama desires your acceptance of two small trouts and four bottles of shrub."

That same summer of 1736 saw the marriage of John's first cousin, "Tommy Cave", now become, by the death of his brother, 5th Baronet and owner of Stanford. His bride's connections were not less wealthy, and more interesting than those of Mary Nicholson. Elizabeth Davies was descended from Sir Ralph's most intimate friend, Sir Roger Burgoyne of Sutton, and her grandmother, Lady Burgoyne (Constance Lucy of Charlccote), as a widow was consulting Lord Fermanagh in all her business difficulties.

Sir Thomas Cave, with something of his father's wit, and keeping up an intimate friendship with his cousins, writes to Lord Fermanagh:

29 May 1736. "The 27th of this month I departed the Life of a Batchelor, which example I hope Mr. Verney will soon follow, & that we may mutually support the Commendable Ambition of striving to make the best of husbands.

I am now to wish the two ladies a speedy Voyage the same way, with my humble service to them respectively, I beg your Lordsp. to tell Cousin Betty that Mad. Tom thinks Matrimony will do her no Harm, and as for Mouse I think she might receive Benefit from it, so I humbly prescribe a quick application & flatter myself they will approve of the Doctor."

19 July 1736. Lady Fitzwalter in her congratulations is sure that the bridegroom has the "young lady's inclinations".

"Betty V", Lord Fermanagh's eldest sister, is taking up her abode at Bath, a favourite resort of spinster ladies of quality, where, like Betty, they had many family friends. She arrived after a pleasant journey, with thoughts of her nephew's wedding,

"with only 4 in the Coach, and neither heat nor cold, dirt nor dust to annoy us. . . I have got into my old lodging at Mrs. Vaughan's in St. James's St. at Bath. . . I suppose your Grand Affaire is over, the morning I set out on my journey I had an Impulse it would be the wedding day; on which supposition I drank the Bride & Bridegroom's health at Slough where we din'd, and tho' my person was every moment at a farther distance, my thoughts attended the whole ceremony as does my Prayers for their true & lasting happiness."

15 July  
1736.

She concludes with elaborate compliments to the Nicholson family, whom she had seen at Clapham.

Before the young couple start on their wedding journey, Mr. Nicholson is anxious to have an At Home at Clapham, on a Saturday and Sunday after the wedding. John begs his father to help him to send out verbal invitations; he has himself sent to Mr. Fortescue, Mr. and Mrs. Baker, Mr. Byng and Mr. Wynne, Parson Aylsmere, Mr. Bluett, and other gentlemen of Little Chelsea. He also asks his father to superintend the building of their new coach; he thinks the doorway should be  $22\frac{1}{2}$  inches, half an inch wider than his father's, "and will you let me know the size of your skirts." He also begs that his two men, who are to come to him with the coach, should buy themselves 2 or 3 pairs of white stockings.

When John and his bride had left London, a quaint letter came to his father:

"My Lord,—We are the Drumes belonging to Chelsea, who went to pay our Respects to your Lordship's Son and new-made Daughter. But Mr. Nicoles would give us nothing, nor suffer the Young Couple to receive our Entertainment. My Lord, we are old men, that has served the Crown of England above forty years, and most humbly hope that your Lordship will Consider our Expençe in goeing and coming—from your Lordship's most Obedient Servants—Chelsea Drums, waitting your Lordship's pleasure."

July  
1736.

John Verney and his bride have gone down to Tunbridge; Lady Fermanagh seems to have knocked herself up with the excitement of the marriage of her dearly beloved eldest son.

21 Aug.  
1736.

*Ralph Verney to Mrs. Stone*

"Dear Aunt,—I am so much concerned for fear of losing one of the best Friends upon Earth that I scarce know how to set pen to paper. My Mama about 6 o'clock this morning was seiz'd with a violent Apoplecktick Fitt, for which she was immediately Blouded and in about quarter of an hour she revived. Sir Hans Sloan came soon after, and ordered the Surgeon to bleed her a second time, whilst he writ a Prescription of the Medicines that were proper for her Case, but, before half an ounce of Blood was taken from her, she fainted away and lay in the most extreame Agoney for some time. I thank God she is now a little better.

Since the above written My Mama has been taken Ill again, and if it be not inconvenient your company with Mrs. Jakeman would be a great comefort to her. I earnestly desire you would not put yourself into any fright about it because it can do my Mama no good and will prejudice your health, which will be a double affliction to this Family. I must conclude with repeated Petitions to the same Purpose."

Mrs. Stone had shut herself up since her husband's death, and had resisted all the advice given by Mrs. Isted to see some of her friends and to leave her home. But she no sooner heard of her sister's illness than she hurried off to the afflicted family at Chelsea, and was of great comfort to them. Lord Fermanagh thanks her for

2 Sept.  
1736.

"your most kind though short visit to my wife, and I am confident it did her great service. I thank God she begins mending though it is but slowly. I hope you got well to Brightwell, and shall hope for your company here for a longer time as soon as it is convenient."

Catherine Verney adds her thanks to Mrs. Stone for the comfort she has given them:

7 Sept.  
1736.

"My Papa had a letter last night from Mrs. Anne Isted; she is under affliction for the death of her good friend Lady Russell. My Bro. Verney &c. are gon to Lewes, and return to Tonbridge again. My Lady Fermanagh and Aunt Lovett was here a Sunday, and told us the Bath and Bristol ladies was to set out for Stanford, where they stay about three weeks, and then come up to town."

22 Sept.  
1736.

*Mrs. Isted to Mrs. Stone*

". . . I rejoice to hear that you left Lady Fermanagh in so fair a way of doing well. I hope she will be so kind as to herself and



friends as not to neglect taking the proper care of continuing long amongst us, for I know nobody that would be a greater loss to all that are so happy as to know her.

I mourn the death of her likeness, which was Ld. Jeams Russel's Lady, who was a most particular friend of mine, just such a valuable Lady as good Lady Fermanagh. But the world is a place of trouble.”

Elizabeth Verney writes to her brother, Lord Fermanagh, apparently from Bath:

“Parson Chaloner is here and his Brother Captn. to attend him; he looks sadly but he has a great opinion that these waters will do him good. . . . This place now fills pretty fast, I wish I guess others lessing. If my Nephew and his Lady are returned from Tunbridge you will pay Em my Respect and Constant Wishes for their health and happiness.” 22 Sept.  
1736.

The journey to Tunbridge Wells being accomplished, John writes a series of letters to Lord Fermanagh, with 10,000 thanks to both parents for their cordial kindness in promoting the wedding festivities. It is still the etiquette in letters for a son to address his father as “Honoured Sir”, but this did not satisfy John's affectionate intimacy with his father, and he generally starts with “Most dear Papa”.

*The Hon. John Verney to Lord Fermanagh*

“We set out yesterday at  $\frac{1}{2}$  an hour after 4 O'clock in the morning, got to the Bull in the Bush  $\frac{1}{2}$  an hour after ten, and safe to Tunbridge Wells at 4. We walk'd upon the Walks that evening, and found here a good deal of company: Lady Fortescue, Mrs. Manding are here & lodge near us, Mr. Greenville is gone for London today. We are just come from Church, and I think the Church is not so full as a body might expect. The general cry is that the place has not been so full this six years as tis now. I will send a full account of the humours of this place—in the interim must desire you to accept etc.” 15 Aug.  
1736.

The only drawback to his happiness is the news of his mother's illness; he asks after her in every letter.

“We went a Thursday to Lewes, din'd at Brighthelmston [Brighton] a Friday upon a Haunch of Venison which we bought here; weigh'd about 20 pounds, cost 30/-. It was a very stormy day, which made the sea very pleasant to look upon; we pass'd by Sir Wm. Gage's Park, saw his great pond, which some say is 80 or one 6 Sept.  
1736.



hundred acres—Most of the fine Carp we have here come from thence. I think we shall be home next Saturday sennight at farthest. Sir John Shelley, Sir Thos. Dyke & his Lady & the Sergeant at Arms are just come to the Wells; a vast number of people are gone, 17 coaches went away this morning. We are just going to a private ball Mr. Hays gives. . . . Mr. Nicolson & Miss Calvert have joined them; there is no such thing as poted Wheat-ears to be had, the season for em has been over some time."

31 Sept.  
1736.

"Most dear Papa,—I hope my Dear Mama continues mending and that she will be very carefull of herself for the time to come that she may long live to be a comfort and a blessing to her family; no one does or can wish it more than myself. Nine Coaches went away yesterday morning; I met young Mr. Clayden, his Lady & Mrs. Walker . . . here is one Mrs. Glanville & her Daur.; they live in Scotland, the Daur. they say has 50, or £60,000 to her fortune. We breakfasted today along with Mr. Colebrook upon the Walks; they are all to breakfast tomorrow, and a Thursday we design to go to Lewes. I found I should be too late if I staid to bait by the way, so I stopt but for 5 minutes at the Crown at Sevenoaks; gave the horses 3 pints of Ale between em, drank a pint my-self, gave Joe 2 pints & we eat 3 penneth of cold boiled beef a peice & got here at 7 o'clock; the horse brought me very well. . . . We are just now going to set forward for the Walks and so to the Ball at night. . . . My wife is at this time returning a Visit at Lady Tylneys."

The day's adventures do not seem to belong to a delicate man.

22 Sept.  
1736.

*The Honourable John, from Tunbridge Wells, to Lord F.*

". . . Our things are all gone for London today & we design to set out a Friday night. . . . Last night there was a ball at Mount Sion; we thought they could not have mustered up a set of Dancers, but it seems they did make shift to get six couples. We are to sup tonight with Mr. Frederick at the Sussex Tavern & we design to invite all we know to drink *tea* with us tomorrow in the afternoon as is customary when going off."

They returned to London to find Lady Fermanagh on her feet again and fairly convalescent.

Catherine Verney sends another report of her mother to Mrs. Stone. Lady Fermanagh is sending her sister a little box, with a few sweetmeats, and

12 Oct.  
1736.

"when my Brother Verney came from Tonbridge he brought his Mama up some mushrooms. . . . Miss Philly Isted is come up to Mrs. Matt the Bonesetter. The woman says she has put in severall

bones of her foot and was to set her backbone; none of the family is come up with her, one Mrs. Moor is with her at the Grecian Coffee House. My Uncle Palmer and other company is come in, so I must beg leave to conclude.

P.S. I can't help telling you poor little Fop is dead and buried, so that we have all been under great concern."

Catherine uses her mother's seal of the Paschal Lamb & Flag.

*Elizabeth Verney to Lord Fermanagh*

3 Jan.  
1737.

". . . I am greatly Oblig'd for my Relations at Clapham that amidst their delights they can think of me, and I desire you will Offer Em my thankful Respects with all kind wishes proper for the season."

The next spring, Lady Fermanagh writes:

". . . My daughter Verney was at Court of the Birthday; there was but a very little finery, abundance of People in Striped Lutestring. . . . Ralph went to Cambridge this week. . . . They also went together to the Opera."

12 Mar.  
1737.

*Ralph Verney, at Cambridge, to Lord F.*

20 Mar.  
1737.

"Hond. Sir,—After receiving your kind present I must not omitt to return my thankses . . . tis said that Mr. Trefusis will be married to Mr. Afflick's daughter this week. The University having petitioned the Parliament to suppress the Playhouse and Taverns here; the Petition in the half of the playhouse was sent up last week, signed by the Grand Jury and a great number of Gentlemen, but tis imagin'd here it will be to noe purpose."

Mrs. John Verney came of age, 2nd April 1737, and they were now anxious to settle in a home of their own.

*Catherine Verney to Mrs. Stone*

26 May  
1737.

"Dear Aunt,— . . . My Papa and Brother have been down in Northamptonshire to see Sir William Norwich's estate which they are about purchasing with my Sister's fortune, but they have not quite agreed for it yet. . . ."

*Lord Fermanagh to Mrs. Stone*

31 May  
1737.

". . . I and my eldest son have been in Northamptonshire to see an Estate, and since his return he has been extreamely ill. We thought it a fever and sent for Sir Hans, and since that for Doctor

Leene; the latter says it is upon his Nerves, and he has no fever but lowness of spirits; he has been ill a week, yesterday he got up and bore it very well. I pray God send him better to our comfort."

Mrs. Stone replies:

3 June  
1737.

"I am more sorry for dear Mr. Verney's illness than I can express, and most earnestly pray to God for his Recovery. I beg a letter from some hand next post how he does, for I shall be in a sad way till I know he is better, I so hartily love him; and I pray God the fright and concern do not disorder your Lordship, my dear Sister, nor poor Mrs. Verney his Lady. I think Dr. Leene is a man of great judgment. If Mr. Verney knows I have heard of his illness, I beg you will favour me in telling him that my best wishes and respects attend him and Mrs. Verney also."

The next post brought no better news; Lord Fermanagh writes to her:

4 June  
1737.

"I'me now with my dear son at Clapham, who is in the utmost danger, and I'me afraid can't live many days; his fever is constantly upon him; I hope that God will yet restore him, but if he thinks him fitter for heaven than earth, we must pray for grace to support us under so great a tryal."

Sir Hans Sloan's prescription, in the early days of John Verney's short illness, was sent to Lord Fermanagh.

28 May  
1737.

"Sir,—I think you should give the Bolus and omitt the Bark, now his pulse is quieter and breth straiter. You may lay on two blisters to his arms above his elbows, continue his Sal Ammoniac and Lambiture. I hope the fitt will be lesse tonight. I will be glad to hear tomorrow morning early how he has passed his night, being in concern that the straitness of breth should continue. I am,  
Sir, your most humble servant, HANS SLOANE."

*Lord Fermanagh to Mrs. Stone*

6 June  
1737.

"Deare Sister,—Your repeated concern for my Dear Child ought always to be remembered, and no one was more sensible of it than he was while living, but he left us yesterday morning, about 9 aclock, and we can never see him more in this world, but I trust in God we shall all meet in Heaven, where I daresay he now is in perfect happiness, which I can never more enjoy here for want of him. I know how you share with us in this affliction, and intreat you to moderate it since it is God's Will. . . . Mr. Nicholson and my daughter Verney particularly desire their most humble service to you."



*Rev. W. Butterfield to Lord Fermanagh*

9 June  
1737.

“My Lord,—I never put pen to paper with so true and pungent a concern as I do now, and the fulness of my grief makes me thus early in my Condolence on the late melancholy occasion. I am thro’ly sensible that it requires more consolation than my poor thoughts are able to contribute to your Lordsp. Time alone can but diminish so deep an Impression. We all here bear too large a share in the loss to do anything but to express our sincere sorrow, and that the Great Being may alleviate your affliction and long continue to those surviving blessings he has conferred upon you is the hearty prayer of, My Lord, Your Ldspd. most afflicted and obedient humble servant,  
W. BUTTERFIELD.”

The contemporary account is:

“The said John Verney, to the great grief of his parents, died at Clapham of a fever on Sunday morning (about a quarter past nine of the clock), the 5 June 1737. He was carried from Clapham about 3 a clock in the morning on Monday, the 20 June 1737, and was at Middle Claydon about 7 a clock that evening and buried there at that time.”

*Elizabeth Verney to Lord Fermanagh*

11 June  
1737.

“Oh, dear Brother, how shall I write for tears or how can I express my Griefe for this Astonishing Blow, which I was wholly unprepared to receive, and is the greatest shock I ever felt in my life, having lost all those endearments in a Nephew which you expressed in the Son, and yet I’m sensible if my sorrow is great, what must you, my Sister, and the poor young Lady endure. I wish I could relieve as much as I pittie you all, and am a partaker in your suffering. But whilst we are lamented here on earth, our Dearly Beloved is with the Saints in Heaven; that must and ought to Comfort us, though all the Reason I can at present call to my aid is Insufficient to resist the stronger Opposition of Human Nature, and I can with truth say I am, Dear Brother, as much as may be, Your partner in Affliction as well as in Affection. E. VERNEY.

I present my Condoling Respects to all your family, to my Uncle Palmer, and if you think it not Improper, I will offer Em to Mr. Nicolson.”

The sorrow in the family was very genuine. Sir Thomas Cave writes from Stanford to Lord Fermanagh:

“The sudden and melancholy account of Mr. Verney’s death gave us both great surprise and concern. The Trouble your Lordship is 11 June  
1737.



now under without doubt is one of the Greatest that could Affect you in this life. But it must be some Mitigation to your present Grief to think that as my Relation's Life was as Spotless and Innocent as was possible for Man to lead, his Happiness must be as great as can be enjoyed."

Mrs. Bluett, writing from Holcomb Court, adds her condolences and her tribute to

18 June  
1737.

"the Many Virtues and real Meritt of the Deceased, as his greatest ornaments when living, must be the greatest comfort a Surviving Friend can enjoy. . . . I very much pitty the poor Young Lady, and am glad to find that she has gon back to you from such a melancholy place as her own home must be to her now."

23 June  
1737.

*Ambrose Isted to Lord F., from Trinity Coll., Oxon.  
(docketed his Condolence)*

"My Lord,—Tho' a Letter of this kind can be by no means agreeable to your Lordship, as it must, I fear, renew your affliction, yet upon the Death of Mr. Verney, to whom I had so many obligations, I thought it would seem disrespect in me to be silent, tho' perhaps most proper on this melancholy occasion. When I consider that I have received constant marks of Mr. Verney's friendship ever since I was a child till this time, and that from his goodness I had reason to hope for a continuance of it, I may justly say that mine is no small loss, tho' it will appear so in comparison with the Loss he is to his Lady, Parents, Sisters and Brother; in the latter I flatter myself that I shall find the friend I have lost in Mr. Verney. But I'll leave this Melancholy Theme and hasten to assure your Lordship how much I think myself—My Lord, Yr. Ldships. Obliged humble  
Servant, AMBROSE ISTED.

My most humble Service to My Lady, the Ladies, & Mr. Verney."

This modest and well-written letter came from a young man, the son of Ecton, who had been admitted two years previously (Feb. 27, 1735) to Trinity College, Oxford, at the age of seventeen.

26 June  
1737.

Mr. Nicholson and the young widow, after a visit to Chelsea, set out from Clapham to visit Mr. and Mrs. Knapp at Linford, and Mr. Nicholson reports to Lord Fermanagh that the journey was accomplished "without the least complaint from your Daughter, who desires me to give her duty to your Lordship and my Lady, as does also Mrs. Knapp."

*Josias Nicholson to Lord Fermanagh, from Linford*

24 July  
1737.

"I received your most kind and obliging letters, both to me and my daughter, and should have answered sooner had not the pain which was in my foot when at Chelsea, removed into my right hand, which has been in Flannell ever since. Your daughter is in a tolerable good health . . . her sister Knapp is exceeding kind to her, and does all in her power to assist and divert her. When we came first down she would frequently goe into her Closett alone.

Mrs. Knapp perceived it, and since that she is always with her; she has not been out of the doors since she came, though neighbouring Ladies have been here; viz. Mrs. Wright, Mrs. Blacknell's daughters, Mrs. Uthwat, Lady Chester, and others, but she would not appear to any of them. . . . She is inclined to stay here a little longer. I shall do as she pleses. . . . Your affect. Brother and humble servant,  
JOS. NICHOLSON."

Mrs. Stone is anxious to receive the Verney family at Brightwell, but Lord Fermanagh replies that their company

"can no ways divert or be a pleasure to anyone at present. As to writing to my Daughter Verney, I don't think she expects it, but to be sure she will take it very kindly, but as you don't love writing, you may very well do it or not as you are most inclined. The Mellons you sent were exceeding fine, and great Raryties, for we have seen none yet in the market."

7 July  
1737.

*Catherine Verney to Mrs. Stone*

18 Oct.  
1737.

"Dear Aunt,—You were so kind to send such a lod of good things, that indeed my Papa and Mamma were quite ashamed to receive Em. My Mamma says though she beg'd a few Larks she did not intend nor think to have given you so much trouble as to have sent the whole dinner, which indeed you did, there was no occasion to buy anything. . . . Judge Denton and Mrs. Claydon came and Mr. Nicholson and Mr. Knapp. My sister Verney holds very well still, the wet nurse is come up and is in the house with her, my Lady Cave and Aunt Lovett and Miss are come to town from Yeovel; Sir Thomas and his Lady come up this winter to town. Lady Fitzwalter was here, but did not stay dinner as she was to go home to Cards. . . . Poor Mr. Middleton is a Bankrupt. Miss Busby's match with Mr. Tynt goes on, my brother Ralph went to Cambridge the week before last."

Three folio pages of very flowery verse were sent to Lord Fermanagh, the family hopes were now centred on the expected baby, who, it was taken for granted, would be a son.

What tho' thine other pretious self be here  
 The deepest longest mourner for her Dear,  
 Yet may she by peculiar blessings bear  
 Another likest self and hopefull Heir,  
 Who to the height shall act the prattler's part,  
 And lisp new comfort to their yeilding hearts,  
 Shall fondly hang upon his grandsire's hand,  
 Or stride the mimic horse. . . .

Alas for poet and prophecy, the long-expected babe was a girl, and the young widow soon married again; only to the parents was John's loss irreparable.

21 Oct.  
1737.

Lord Fermanagh writes to Millward: "My daughter Verney was this day brought to bed of a daughter."

He announces the event to Mrs. Stone:

22 Oct.  
1737.

"Yesterday my daughter Verney was brought to bed of a sweet pretty girl, and both like to be very well, she made use of Dr. Bamber, I wish the dear Father had been alive to see it. . . ."

The Honble. Mrs. Mary Verney was on Friday, 21st October 1737, delivered of a daughter: baptized by Rev. Mr. Goodwin in Clapham Church, 17th November 1737.

Sponsors: Catherine, Viscountess Fermanagh, since Countess of Verney; Mrs. Catherine Knapp, wife of John Knapp, Esq. (for whom stood Miss Honor Calvert), and Josias Nicolson, Esq., who named her Mary.

11 Nov.  
1737.

"We received the Hare by the Winslow Carrier and indeed a very fine one it was as I ever see, and they are grown a great rareties in most countries, for I hear that even in Chesshyre people lay down their Hounds for want of Game."

15 Nov.  
1737.

". . . The Queen has been mighty ill and like to have died, she is much better."

18 Nov.  
1737.

". . . The Queen I think holds out still but I fear no likelihood of recovery."

29 Oct.  
1737.

*Elizabeth Verney, from Bath, to Lord Fermanagh*

"I have receiv'd both my dear Brors. letters, and return all due thanks especially for letting me know Mrs. Verney is safely delivered, I most heartily wish her, my Lady, and yourself, much joy in the little stranger, and hope it will be a growing comfort to you all, I congratulate my nephew Ralph in pertickuler, and wish my two nieces joy of their niece."

The same year that had brought so great a sorrow to the Verney family was marked at its close by the death of the good Queen. Lord Fermanagh writes:

“ . . . Bess has not bought the Crape but will buy what she hears is handsomest, but as yet few are fixt, though the Court is to appear tomorrow in Black. The Queen’s body is to be moved tonight to the Prince’s Chamber in the House of Lords, and to be buried about the 22nd. inst.” 3 Dec. 1737.

Handel’s anthem, “When the ear heard her, then it blessed her”, was composed for Queen Caroline’s funeral, and found an echo in every heart.



## CHAPTER XXVII

### BAKERS OF PENN

THE Bakers with the Christian name of Daniel succeeded each other from the time of Queen Elizabeth to that of George II. They are now chiefly remembered as the ancestors of Gibbon's friend, John Baker Holroyd, 1st Earl of Sheffield, and of his daughter, Maria Josepha Holroyd, who to extreme old age was so remarkable a figure as Lady Stanley of Alderley, Cheshire, and of Penrhos, Anglesey.

The Bakers enter largely into the Claydon correspondence after the marriage of Sir John Verney, Lord Fermanagh, with Elizabeth Baker in 1697.

Three Daniel Bakers in succession owned and occupied the property at Penn in South Bucks, and the house afterwards known as Tyler's Green House, which has entirely disappeared. The elder Daniel Baker probably made his chief home in Hatton Garden, as he was a wealthy merchant in the city. He was born in 1627, and married at the age of thirty to Barbara Steele; they had two daughters, Sarah Luttrell and Elizabeth Verney. Mr. Baker's death in 1700, and his wife's death at Penn in 1710, have already been told.

Their only son Daniel married Martha Mellish of Blith, Notts, and had a formidable family of nine sons and eight daughters; a family which shrank to nothing in the next generation, as the son, another Daniel (born 1698), left no descendants, and the property passed by purchase to his brother-in-law, Lord Sheffield.

The second Daniel Baker, Lady Fermanagh's brother, kept a Diary written in the years 1690 to 1705, which has been given to the County Museum at Aylesbury by Miss Maud Grenfell, a descendant of Daniel's daughter, Mrs. Holroyd.

The Diary records the births of his fifteen children, of whom two died in infancy, but as Sir John Verney heartlessly remarked,

he still had a baker's dozen! He also details various accidents in his life in order that he may remember "the signal and extraordinary mercies vouchsafed to him". They are varied in nature—there are several fires, and horses that run away or are stuck in the bogs of the "winter waies", when he only just escapes "being stifled in the dirt". Twice over an infant "was like to have been choaked with a copper farthing which stuck in its throat".

One of these adventures happened at Claydon, a few months after Daniel's sister Elizabeth had married Sir John Verney, and was probably the first time her relations had paid her a visit there.

"In the year 1697, my Eldest Daughter, Ann Baker was at her Uncle, Sir John Verney's house at Claydon, and there was a great Well, not far from the Place, which being almost covered over with leaves and other things, it could not be discerned, and my child was so very near it, that tho' her Grandmother was with her, as also Sir John, yet had she went but one foot further she had certainly been drowned; All the help in the world could have signified nothing; the Well being such a very big Depth; the Lord be praised for this very great mercy."

The last adventure in the Diary was in March 1705.

"I had a very fiery bay guelding and as I was all alone riding of him in the Common, I alight'd just to goe into a field of Mr. Shrimpton's to see some lambs I had there; and as I was getting up again on my horse's back he flounc'd and flung me, and my foot was in the stirrop and I down upon my back, and could hardly gett my legg out of the same, but thro' much difficulty at last I did it; and away he did runn and none were able to catch him; by God's great mercy I have not been killed, and my wife was this very time in the straw, and then lay in of her fifteenth child, and what sad news it must have been to her to have heard of my being killed."

*Daniel Baker, from Penn, to Ralph Verney*

8 Dec.  
1709.

"We are extreamly glad you are all well at Baddow, and do wish your Lady A good Houre whenever it comes. I send these Sir also to thank you for your kind intended Present of a Collar of Brawn, which is very acceptable, wee all being great Lovers thereof. [He sends a full account of the two carriers that ply between London and Penn]. . . I saw Collonell Lovett in Town who will now be shortly going for Claydon, wher he will find two troublersome guests of mine who have been there a great while; I mean my two Daughters. But Sir I have had so long the experience of all your

families respects to mee and mine, that I know I may say they are hartily wellcome."

8 Dec.  
1709.

*Daniel Baker to Lord F. at Claydon*

"... I have not been a week yet at Penn and I have got a great cold. . . . I must not omitt to return you my thanks for that noble Pheasant and Woodcock which you sent my wife in my absence. I have also an abundance of thanks to return you for the trouble my two Daughters do give you; but I hope their carriage is such, that they make as little trouble as ever they can. . . . I do not doubt their wellcomes at Claydon, but I hope now they will be thinking of returning to Penn, for I long for to see 'em, and pray tell 'em they will meet here with an harty reception. . . . I am pleased the little fish I sent you proved good, though there was the least choice that ever I knew, else I had sent you some soles; but there were none, nor no Salmon in Town, and very little Cod that was good. . . . I rejoyce your Lordship is pleased with Dr. Beveridge's Book, I have reason to thank God that ever I read it, and may your Lordship receive the same benefit by it."

Beveridge died a year before this was written; he was a devoted parish priest, and wrote many controversial works. His *Private Thoughts on Religion* and *Private Thoughts of a Christian Life* had just been published by his executor, so these may be the works that Mr. Baker so much admires. Beveridge offended the Court by refusing to fill the See of Bath and Wells when Ken was deposed, and perhaps by this action he escaped the fate of Bishop Kidder in the great Storm of 1703. He did not sympathise with the schemes of toleration of William III. and Tillotson, who is reported to have addressed Beveridge with the words, "Doctor, Doctor, Charity is better than Rubrics". During the last four years of his life he was Bishop of St Asaph, and *Beveridge on the Catechism* was long held in repute in that Diocese.

Mr. Baker took a great interest in his sons' education, and at the time of Lord Fermanagh's successful election in 1710, two of the young Bakers were actively working for him on their way to Cambridge. As long as Elizabeth, Lady Fermanagh, reigned at Claydon, her nephews and nieces were much at her home.

There is a bright little letter of Daniel Baker's to Ralph, after a Christmas gathering:

17 Jan.  
1710.

"Deare Sir,—Our Journey home was as prosperous and pleasant as we could have wished, bating the Regrett of having left so good



company behind us . . . we got hither befor the Night and with as good Appetites as A Fox-Hunter that has fasted ten hours for his sport."

Mr. Baker was a sincerely religious man and anxious to bring up his children in the same principles, but he was credited with being somewhat too fond of money and was never as popular with the Verneys as his father had been, in spite of the kindness of his constant, rather bourgeois, letters.

*Daniel Baker, from Penn, to Lord F.*

15 Sept.  
1716.

" . . . My daughters have stay'd a long while at Claydon, indeed much longer than ever we did design, for I never intended longer than three weeks or a month at the most. Wee should be all glad here that you should oblige us with Mistress Verney's good company, as long here at Penn or even much longer she or any of your family shall always be welcome at Penn, and shall meet with the same best reception this Barren Place can afford. I Hope next Monday, God willing, we shall not fail to have my daughters returned here, and our coach will then sett out for to meet Em."

"My Lord,—I Hope this will find you much better, I thank God what Doctor Mead has prescribed to my Son has been of great service to him. I should not have troubled your Lordship with the particulars of my children, but that I have all along had the experience of your favours and civilitys to 'Em. . . . Mr. Walpole's schem as to the funds is to be brought in the House this day, and great expectation among the stock-jobbers are waiting upon it.

19 Mar.  
1717.

Now I am in town, I will goe to Newgate Market and see if I can meet with a good Whiteing for you, believing you love Em, and they may be good for you, Tuesday is a bad day for Em, but I know you will accept of the will for the deed, if they are not so good, as I could wish Em."

It is to be feared that "good will" would hardly make up for bad fish.

Miss Starkey at Steeple Claydon keeps up with the Dowager; she is apparently building herself a new town house. She writes to Catherine, Lady Fermanagh:

"I think Lady Dowager has undertaken a great work, I wish she don't regret it, it looks reasonable enough, it should be so. . . . A fine Barrill of Oysters has arrived my Brother and self return our most humble thanks, Clark said there was a letter, but we have not got it, I never met with such a carrier. Doctor Fruen was with Mrs. Butterfield on Sunday, he gave some little hope of her re-

4 Mar.  
1726.



covery, but she continues very ill. They were so kind to send me word so I went to him, and he has ordered me some little matters which he hopes as well as with the Spring will be of service to me."

4 Apr.  
1726.

*Daniel Baker to Lord Fermanagh*

"My Lord,—You and your Lady are extremely kind in seeing my daughter Mead, we'll often hear from them of your welfares. . . . I doubt not than you have heard of the assault and indignity some justices have put on my Lord Bridgwater, by wresting, if they could, the power out of his hands as to appointing the Quarter Sessions, and fixing them wheresoever they pleased, as they lately did to oblige some at Aylesbury. I believe no Ld. Lieut. had such a thing ever offered to him before . . . for if this example should take Air, all Ld. Lieuts. would be but Cyphers. . . . Sir Thomas Lee and others will be at the next Quarter Sessions, and if my Lord Fermanagh would be so kind as to be there too, it will give a good count . . . my Lord Bridgwater and all other gentlemen will be extremely pleased. . . . If your Lordship and her Ladyship go down to Claydon, I hope you will take a bed with us, and make my house your halfway."

9 Mar.  
1732.

Sir Nathaniel Curzon, who represents the chief family at Penn, writes to ask Lord Fermanagh for the loan of "that Book of Glover's Pedigree of Vernons and Argument, which your lordship did once honour me with."

2 and 22  
Feb.  
1734.

The Dowager Lady Fermanagh writes to announce the death of "Sir James" and the suicide of Mr. Stanley that married Sir Henslow's daughter, leaving six children.

25 Oct.  
1735.

"Mrs. Lovett comes to town this night along with the Thompsons", the family into which Penelope Cave married.

Several of Daniel Baker's daughters were also married.

Anne, who so nearly ended her career at the bottom of the Claydon well, was reported to have a beau, but we have no record of her wedding.

Elizabeth married Mr. Mead, who was settled in London and was often visited by her Aunt, Lady Fermanagh.

Martha married Henry Faure, of Egham, and left three daughters, of whom Anne married D. Hillersdon of Elstow, Beds, and Dolly married D. Falknier of Co. Dublin.

Maria Josepha (who carried her double Christian name to her niece in Lord Sheffield's family) married Mr. Atkinson.

Joanna, also called Susanna, married T. Carter of Westowe,

Cambs. Her son married Lord Sheffield's second daughter, Louisa Holroyd, and her daughter, Harriet, married Sir Henry Clinton.

Dorothy, the youngest, married Isaac Holroyd, and her son, John Baker Holroyd, born 1735, was made a peer of Ireland as Baron Sheffield of Dunnamore, and later, Earl Sheffield in the peerage of the United Kingdom, and has numerous descendants from his daughter, Maria Josepha.

The last Daniel Baker died unmarried in 1738, and was succeeded by his clergyman brother, Samuel Baker, B.D., the "Dr. Baker" of Lord Fermanagh's letter.

The daughters had shown some commendable energy in managing their own affairs, and were not as helplessly submissive as some maidens in the foregoing letters. On the occasion of a great public function in the Abbey, which Mrs. Baker attended, with a sheaf of daughters, some of those left at home went to London unbeknown'st, in their parents' absence, and when Mr. Carter's courtship was discouraged at Penn, Joanna was married first, and made all suitable apologies afterwards.

*Joanna Carter to her Mother, Mrs. Baker*

8 July  
1738.

"Honrd. Madam,—I hope this will find you got safe to Blith, and that you found all friends well there. I was extreemly happy in the pleasure of Sister Holroyd's company, which has given me the greatest satisfaction, for I own I should have been very uneasy if she had gone out of England and I had not seen her. . . . I could not persuade her to stay longer with me, or to have sent her to Huntingdon, which would have made her journey much easier, for it must be a vast fatigue to goe up to Town one day and set out again the next, for so long a journey. I beg Madam you will accept of my humble thanks for being so kind as to promise to answer for my little one. . . . I expect Sister Faure, Dolly, and Nurse Pagett tomorrow, and propose sending for my Midwife next week."

The rest of the letter is taken up in elaborate apologies and explanations in justification of her marriage to Mr. Carter, with whom she pronounces herself to be as happy as possible. She adds a postscript:

"I understand my sister Holroyd that there has been no present made to Sister Bessy for the trouble she has been at in Lady Fermanagh's affairs; I am very desirous there should and whatever anybody does, I shall readily agree to with pleasure. . . ."

Her brother, Daniel Baker, lived but a few months longer.

21 Oct.  
1738.

In one of Lord Fermanagh's letters to Millward about the farm tenants, he requires a good many pigeons for a dinner-party, as "Doctr. Baker, who now owns Penn (Mr. Dan. Baker died about six weeks ago at Penn) and some others are to be here, so we should be glad of a hare if the weather is fine to catch one". A very casual way in which to hear of Mr. Baker's death.

A picture exists of three of the daughters, Mrs. Holroyd, Mrs. Mead, and Mrs. Atkinson, belonging to Mr. Alfred Sotheby, a descendant of Mrs. Holroyd's.

Of Elizabeth Lady Fermanagh's last years we have but few details; she had been the chief link between Penn and Claydon. Catherine, her successor, had never become intimate with her, but "the Dowager" had kept up friendly relations with Mary Lovett and Margaret Cave and with Penelope Vickers. During the summer of 1736 the Honble. John's marriage had taken place, and before the end of that year the family were suddenly surprised by the death of the "Dowager", who had been so well known to them all, and such a kind hostess at Claydon.

Catherine Verney sent the news to her aunt, Mrs. Stone:

14 Dec.  
1736.

"... Last Saturday evening, about 5 aclock, my Lady Fermanagh died suddenly as she set in her Chair in the Palour. There was Company in the room with her, and she was talking and laughing the minute she dyed. She has been out of order some time, not so bad but she went abroad, she has dyed without a Will, so all she has left goes between the Bakers and Mr. Luttrell. I believe shee will be buried at Penn, but that we an't sure."

Catherine, Lady Fermanagh, writes at the end of the year:

30 Dec.  
1736.

"My Lady Fermanagh's affaires remain just as they did, there is nothing divided or disposed on, my sister Lovett is still there."

Her stepdaughter, Elizabeth Verney, writes with more astonishment than regret at Bath:

3 Jan.  
1737.

"I was greatly surprised at the News of my Mother's Death, not thinking she had been so bad as to be sure she was, tho' she was taken off suddenly at last. I have not heard of her Interment yet, but suppose it was over; I put on my mourning a week agoe, which I was oblig'd to buy new here, not having anything that I could wear on the occasion. . . ."





Elizabeth [Baker], 3rd wife of Sir John Verney.





And so, at the age of 62, Elizabeth, Viscountess Fermanagh, died. Married at 22 to an elderly husband, she made him a faithful and affectionate wife, in a society where these qualities were not too common. During the twenty years that she had been mistress at Claydon House, she had looked well to the ways of her household; she had been hospitable to her neighbours, and her popularity in the county had mainly contributed to Sir John's return to Parliament; above all she had mothered his children and grandchildren with a lovewhich (except in the case of his eldest daughter) they had warmly returned. She had kept up with her own family, and had shown her indifference to money, in comparison with domestic peace, when her brother, Daniel Baker, had been reluctant to pay her all that she was entitled to under her father's will. We have an uneasy feeling that in the twenty years of her widowhood she did not manage to retain the affection of the family circle. It may be that hers was a character that supported prosperity better than adversity.

Lady Fermanagh does not seem to have left Claydon graciously. Perhaps her virtuous economy, and the efficient way in which she had routed the drunken gamekeepers and gardeners, and the various hangers-on who turned up at meal-times, had been remembered against her; perhaps she had hardly recovered her balance after the shock of her husband's death in a London lodging; perhaps she was too anxious to claim the farm-stock and the silver tankards and candlesticks which lawfully belonged to her. She got her rights, but never was she invited by the young Lady Fermanagh for the long visits which other members of the family naturally paid to the old home.

After an unsuccessful attempt to settle at Wasing, where she found the house damp, and where there were differences of opinion with her stepson as to the cutting down of trees, she made some stay at Penn, and seems eventually to have settled in London.

She was selling one house, and about to move into another, when death overtook her in the midst of an afternoon party. In justice to her memory, it must be remembered that the letters that may have been written by those who loved her have not come down to us. Mary Lovett, who had shared her later life, and Margaret Cave would surely have expressed something more than astonishment at her sudden end, and reflections upon the expense of the customary mourning.

29 Jan.  
1737.

*The Hon. Catherine Verney to Mrs. Stone*

"... My Ant Lovett and Miss are agoing to live with my Lady Cave. Lady Fermanagh's things have been all appraised and settled, so they all intend to take their lots and not to sell anything. They get about £160 apiece without the house, and that they ask £600 for, but I fancy tis more than they'll get for it."

A hatchment with Lady Fermanagh's arms was put up in the Parish Church of Penn, a tribute of respect which her husband would have favourably regarded. In the same church are two of the dismal eighteenth-century monuments with long Latin inscriptions, now almost illegible, one near the pulpit and another in the north aisle. They commemorate the parents of Lady Fermanagh, Daniel Baker and his wife "Barbara of London", whose deaths in 1700 and in 1710 have been duly recorded in the letters. Also of Daniel Baker, who died in 1738, and his wife, Martha Mellish of Blygh, whose dates are no longer decipherable.

When the great thunderstorm of the French Revolution was about to burst upon unhappy France, no English family can have had more understanding sympathy with its victims than John Baker Holroyd, son of Dorothy Baker of Penn, his wife Abigail Waye and his daughter Maria Josepha. They had just returned from a tour in France and a stay in Paris, where they had known the most brilliant and learned members of the old regime in 1791. When the tragic stream set towards our shores of exiled savants, fugitive princesses, and shipwrecked priests, they found the most efficient protector and friend in John Baker Holroyd, now become Lord Sheffield.

The French refugees who needed medical assistance were taken to Guy's Hospital, of which Lady Sheffield's family were the principal supporters. Lady Sheffield gave them personally the kindest welcome and the most efficient aid. She herself died of a chill, caught on Good Friday 1793, while ministering to the most seriously injured of the French refugees.<sup>1</sup>

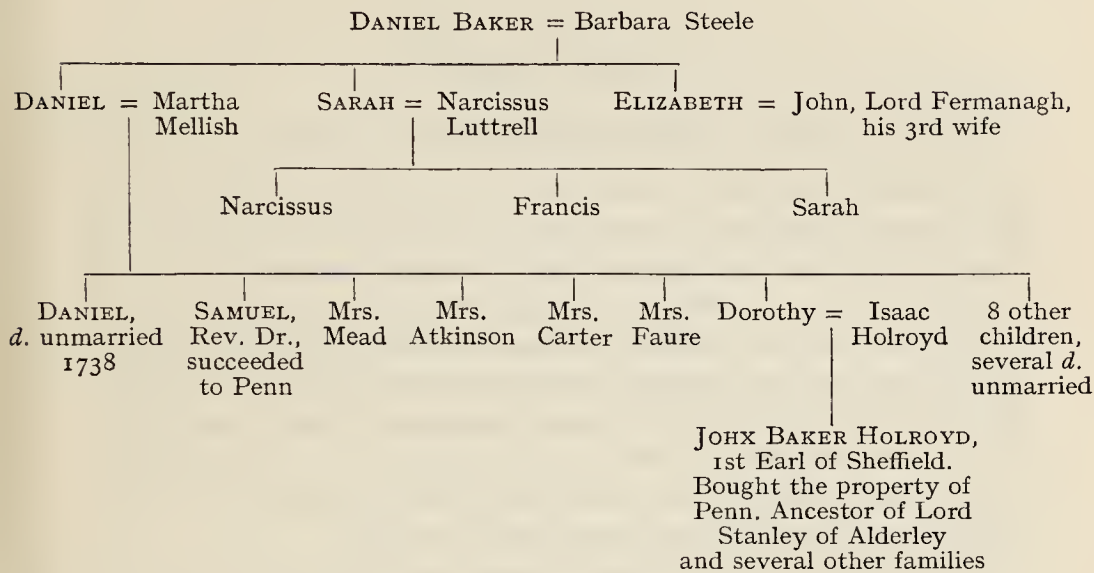
It seemed therefore most appropriate that, when the old home at Penn was given up, the house should be converted into a school for the children of these sufferers, specially for the sons of the French officers.

For years it retained its name of "The French School". Edmund

<sup>1</sup> *The Girlhood of Maria Josepha Holroyd*, by J. H. Adeane. Longmans, 1896.

Burke and other distinguished people took an interest in it, and it was honourably connected with the memory of the Bakers of Penn.

BAKERS OF PENN





## CHAPTER XXVIII

### OF SOME WAITING GENTLEWOMEN AND THE DOWAGER

IN a social life so like our own in many respects, the hard fate of a girl of good family who remained unmarried is very noticeable. No profession and no independent interests were open to her; it was all saving and pinching instead of earning. The girls of this social position were quite as well educated as their brothers, and they wrote and spelt with a correctness that their mothers and aunts had never attained to. There were several famous schools for girls in the environs of London, and if certain "accomplishments" figured too prominently in their programme, housecraft was practically taught, and music was seriously studied.

Indeed, some of Handel's music was first performed, to appreciative audiences, in entertainments given by the girls' schools. Maidens were expected to be married as soon as they left school, and were generally well equipped to make good mistresses of a household, to share in their husbands' interests, and to judge of the progress their boys made at school.

This happy fate is well illustrated in the lives of Margaret (Verney) Lady Cave and of Catherine (Paschall) Lady Fermanagh, but what was to become of the portionless girl who had no prospect of marriage? The problem was complicated by their numbers. At that time, at Claydon, there were three daughters to one son, but with the Shuckburghs, Stewkleys, and Bakers, and other related families, seven daughters, and even ten daughters to one son, was not an unusual proportion.

There was one profession, indeed, which with good will on both sides might be quite a happy one, that of the Waiting Gentlewoman. There are several pleasant instances among the letters, but possibly supplies greatly exceeded the demand.

Elizabeth Jakeman was first at Claydon, and when the household was broken up by John Lord Fermanagh's death, she went to

Baddow Hall. John Collman tried in vain to make her play the time-honoured part of Nerissa to his Portia, but when a more welcome "John" appeared, Mistress Jakeman went with "Charming Molly" to Brightwell, and was her life-long friend and companion.

There were three sets of sisters needing such employment, all nearly related to the Verneys of Claydon.

The elder pair were Mary and Ruth Lloyd, granddaughters of Sir Edmund the standard-bearer, with two brothers, Humphrey and Verney Lloyd, who, poor themselves, refused to be responsible for their support. Nancy Nicholas had exerted herself to find such a post for Ruth. Outside any family connections, the lot of a waiting gentlewoman had its hardships; much stress was laid on the careful washing of point lace, and she was relegated to the steward's room for her meals. Mary Lloyd fared better; she was engaged by a widow lady, Mrs. Tempest, with a warm Irish heart, and her account of Dublin was one of the most encouraging letters when Mary Verney's engagement to John Lovett hung in the balance.

After several years of a very congenial life, Mrs. Tempest married again, and Mary Lloyd was left homeless. The Claydon chatelaines in each generation were kind to their husbands' poor relations; Mary Lloyd became for some years a member of the Claydon family party, always remembered at the end of the letters amongst those to whom "Sarvices" were sent "as due". But another upheaval came to the waiting gentlewoman on the death of John, Lord Fermanagh, in 1717. Lady Cave, with her usual good nature, invited her to Stanford till she could make other plans, but there is rather a painful letter from Mr. Chaloner, enumerating the many articles of luggage which she wished to be transported to Stanford, where they were neither expected nor welcomed.

The other spinster ladies who sorely needed some paid work were the daughters of Lady Gardiner by her second marriage; but of these sisters Cary Stewkley was so capable that she was always in demand when there was any sickness or trouble; Penelope and her husband, Mr. Vickers, were ready to help and advise, and after Lady Gardiner's death, the sisters, by clubbing their poverty, managed to keep up a home. There remained Margaret (*b.* 1665) and "Isabell" (*b.* 1668) Adams, whose father had been Rector of Baddow, and whose mother prided herself on her caustic tongue and sharp wit, in extreme old age.

Margaret Adams had been a much valued member of the family; she and Cary Stewkley were the nieces who cared for Sir Ralph Verney in his last illness, and she had stayed in turn at the various family houses; there was a gracious dignity about her which no ill fortune could subdue. She was not robust in health, her mother in one of her vigorous phrases described her as being "as lean as faro's lean kine, and eats scarce a bit of meat in a week". Sir Richard Blakmore, with the gloomy views the great physicians took of their patients, predicted a rapid consumption, unless Margaret could be supplied with a beneficent she ass, of which the need ever exceeded the supply.

Margaret had owned but a scanty portion of the good things of this life, and the profession of a waiting gentlewoman was only tolerable in youth and with a kindly employer. Margaret and Isabella had known well

. . . Come sa di sale  
Lo pane altrui, e com' e duro calle  
Lo scendere e il salir per l'altrui scale.<sup>1</sup>

But this dependence had in Margaret's case been softened by the cheerfulness with which she consumed the salt bread-and-butter, and the constant good humour with which she ran up and down the alien stairs, on other people's errands. This amiability, however, had its own drawbacks.

In the first Lord Fermanagh's lifetime, Margaret had consulted him on a question of marriage with a certain Mr. Christian.

14 May  
1710.

*Margaret Adams, at Stanford, to Lord F.*

"My Lord,—Having last week reced. a Letter from Mr. Christian, wherein he tells me to have waited on your Lordship and recd. so much Civillity that he was transported with Joy and says you were pleased to tell him you had spoke to my Mother in his behalfe, and found her not altogether so averse as formerly, and that you would attacke her again and doe him what servis you could; for which he thinks himselfe so infinitely obliged to your Lordship that he knows not how to express his thankfulness . . . but I had a letter from my Mother the very next post (to whom I had writt word I had never been well since my Journey from Claydon and if I did not mend feard I must give her the troubel of my company at

<sup>1</sup> How salt another's bread is, and the toil  
Of going up and down another's stairs.

(Roger's *Italy*. Dante's *Paradiso*, xvii. 58.)



home) that she desired me not to speak of it, the weather being hott and the town sickly, and her circumstances so bad now Betty had called in her money in order to marry, that I could not expect to be easy there, and therefore hoped I would take care not to come into such Straits as she was in. By which I daily see I must not return with her consent upon any terms, else I should have thought it very proper when Betty marries, which I guess will be before the end of the summer, that I should be at home and not leave her wholly to a stranger, but her feare of Mr. Christian makes her resolve against my coming home, nor would she ever have consented to our marrying, I can't but think it would be a very convenient opportunity at that time of changing her old Servt. to let us Joyn with her in housekeeping, which might have lessend her expense and not increas'd ours. . . . I am under great trouble with refference to all these affairs. . . . I earnestly intreat you that you would tell me your opinion in this, I return a thousand thanks for the great Cevellytys I recd. from your Lordship, and wish you much joy of the pretty little one in Southampton Street, tho' I had rather it had been the other sex [Catherine's baby daughter]. . . . I hear my Lady is under great trouble at Penn, since Mrs. Baker is soe very ill. I wish comfort both to her and poor Cousin Lovett, whose loss is unspeakable; but she has this satisfaction under it to be near your Lordship, who is now her best friend—and that you may long live to be so to all your children is the sincere wish of your Lordps. Most humble servt. to commd.,

MARGARET ADAMS."

*Lord Fermanagh to Margaret Adams*

30 May  
1710.

" . . . I cannot think that I have done Mr. Christian any service; it not being in my power, I'me confident I did him no dis-kindness. I lately supping with my Aunt in Southampton Street did before your sister discourse of the affair to her. . . . By all that I can find she is as much against what you desire as ever. . . . I see so little prospect of any lasting Joy, that I hope reason will sway with you and you'll wean yourself from the thoughts of having one whom all your friends cannot but disapprove of, tho' some possibly to please you in your present Informations seem to Join in your humour, which I hope you'll overcome, for truly I fear if you persist in this Amour you'll be ungratified, extreably unhappy, therefore I'le never more concern myself about it, but only wish and pray you may gett well off of it, wherein God Almighty be your Director."

*Margaret Adams to Lord Fermanagh*

12 June  
1710.

"I return your Lordship many thanks for the favour of your letter, and that you were pleased to speak to my mother, who I find



is immovable as to any compliance with my proposals, which I am sorry for, and can only say I am very unhappy in having all the Respect and Esteem in the world paid me for soe many yeares as we have bin acquainted (and notwithstanding all the ill treatment he had met withall), by a person who has a Just claim to all the returnes of gratitude that I can show him, and yet no thought propper to pay in such a manner as he alone desires. Since your Lordship has with soe much kindness and friendship spoke your mind, I'll endeavour to comply as far as I can with it, but I am concerned to find you have so hard thoughts of Mr. Christian as to believe I should be extream unhappy with him; and I fear your Lordship has lately heard some ill of him; for I was in hopes it might have had an equall chance of happiness if his life and health continued, or otherwise if not; since I don't heare of any decrease in his business, and I never saw anything of ill-nature in him from my first knowledge of him; and I confess I can't think it Just or Honourable since it has bin carried on so far to quit him unless in any degree willing to it. However, that I may give my Mother all the satisfaction I can, I desin if her mind alter not to stay here as she desires me, tho' it is not convenient on the account of business I have with Betty before her marriage, and niether can I take it well for my Mother to be left to a Stranger, but since it is her own choyce I hope sheel Justify mee in it, and I promise your Lordship to use all arguments I can with Mr. Christian to bring him to acquies in what my Mother's pleasure is. I think myself infinitely obliged to your Lordship for giving yourself any trouble about, and humbly begg your pardon if I have in this matter spoke my thoughts too freely."

The marriage of a portionless maiden was strongly opposed by her relations, and Margaret gave up her intention of marriage on the advice of the head of the family; nothing remained of it but a joke, not unkindly meant, by Sir Thomas Cave, when he alluded to her as "Mrs. Mahommedan, since no Christian".

19 May  
1712.

Two years later she writes of an unexpected legacy from an Aunt at Hillesden, of £10. It did not apparently do her much good, as she only wished that it had been paid in time for her to have put it into "The Lottery".

Betty, the maid, whose marriage was so easily arranged for, left at her own good pleasure. Did it never occur to her mistresses that their mothers' "stolen matching" without asking anyone's advice had a good deal to recommend it?

At the jubilee celebration of the opening of Somerville College, Oxford, Miss Fry remarked that until well-educated girls in good

positions could enter a paid profession they were necessarily dependent upon the men of the family. This condition had lasted practically unchanged from the time of these patient waiting gentlewomen to the great movement for the higher education for women in the closing years of Victoria's reign.

Happily, the Paschall sisters were their lifelong friends. Catherine remembered that it was Mrs. Adams who had introduced her to her husband, and insisted that he should fall in love with her, and so at Chelsea and at Brightwell her daughters were permanent and welcome members of the fireside circle.

Margaret Adams writes of the great pleasure it has given her mother to have Cousin Lovett and little Bess in the house, and it is a reason for other friends to come in to a game of cards:

"To which us of this family are not mortall enemies, but I did not know that pretty Miss had attained to the perfection of a gamester, so necessary to our Sex. I wish she may soon attain a recovery of her health which I doubt not Cousin Vickers will use his utmost endeavour towards, for tis as well a sweet-tempered as a Pretty childe." 31 Mar.  
1715.

But alas, some months later it is reported that Bess's neck is much as it was, and the only hope now is that she should outgrow her troubles.

It was about the last year that Aunt Adams could receive guests; her daughter writes to Lord Fermanagh:

"My Lord,—As you have ever been pleased with especial kindness to my poor mother, I can't forbear, tho' in great confusion, to let you know the sad condition she now lyes in, just alive, and that is all. . . . I got Mr. St. Amand to her who hoped to restore her to health again, but God Almighty has pleased not to make it successful. Betty and Myself who only were with her feared she will not be till morning, so I fetcht Dr. Gibbins to her, who gave her something which caus'd her an hours quiet sleep, but upon waking we found her very much changed for the worse." 10 Sept.  
1715.

Betty, who shared Margaret Adams' watch, was the successor of the Betty, married five years before.

Aunt Adams, who was unaccountably popular with her maids (though when Quarter Day came she could scarcely scramble enough change together to pay their very modest wages), had secured another invaluable "Betty". The latest "Betty" had won Lady Fermanagh's approval by washing her husband's neckcloths

and cuffs "very well and cheap", and she therefore continued to admonish him not to "wear em too dirty", and it was an advantage to Betty to add to her scanty wages by using her talents in the service of the family.

Mrs. Adams loved to contradict the doctor's depressive forecasts, and Margaret wrote five days later:

15 Sept.  
1715. "I return most humble thanks for your kind letter, yesterday which was the first time we found any amendment in my poor Mother."

The learned doctors found it convenient to reverse their prophecies.

She is allowed by Dr. Gibbins and Sir Richard Blackmore (who hearing of her illness came to see her) to be, as they hoped, in a way of recovery.

15 Sept.  
1715. ". . . She has recd. such particular Civilitys from all her friends, that I must ever own with the utmost gratitude. Cos. Denton came twice and offered any assistance Either by his Purse or otherwise, and our next door neighbours the same, and yesterday Cosen Viccars came from Shene on purpose to see her and left a Guiney for her to buy Wine and other necessary things at this time, so I have abundantly reason to acknowledge Providence has been very merciful to us in all our Troubles. My Sister came up last night from Baddow, but the Dost of the Journey together with an Inflammation in her Eyes has occasioned her to be let blod today. Mr. Smith [where Lord Fermanagh was used to lodge] was so kind to lend your Lordship's Chamber to her, my bed was not big enough to hold us both if she had been in the house."

20 Sept.  
1715. "We are all most infinitely obliged to your Lordship for the kind consearn you have shown for my mother during her illness, which we hope had been in some measure over, but it has recurred again pretty violently upon drinking Beer two days together. The Doctor has positively forbid it and ordered her a Rhubarb Tincture twice a day, which wonderfully strengthens her but I doubt I can prevail for the continuance of it she being averse to all medicines. She would just taste your Lordship's admirable venison, for which and the Turkey we all return our humble thanks."

1 Oct.  
1715. "I have seen my sister [Bell Adams] safe in the Coach off for Baddow. . . . My Mother continues finely well and has a desire to venture to Church tomorrow, tho' the Doctor and all her friends thinks it too soon. Cosen Viccars I went to see when I was this day in the Citty and found her very ill with her late fall, and in such



pain in one Breast that she cannot speak or fetch her breath but she shrieks out, and very much bruised all over her."

Margaret has been much knocked up by nursing her mother, but has now recovered, and makes mysterious allusions to a gentleman, possibly Mr. Christian:

"... I can have no thought of resigning him to either of my 26 Oct.  
neighbours, but the difficulty of gaining him for myselfe is now 1715.  
the chiefe matter; the Ladyes at next Door thinke no way so  
propper as your Lordship's eloquent pen, but knowing that is a  
great trouble to you I dare not presume to think on't, so I fear  
before propper wayes of gaining him be thought of, hee'l be  
snatcht away by some fine young Lady or other that desires to be  
a widow, and poor I must live and dye an old Maid. ... I hope your  
health is pretty well when I see with what life and spirit you  
write. My Mother continues pretty harty and escaped all dangers'  
Clutches."

"... We have all got into the Modish Distemper of the town and 13 Dec.  
season, severe Colds, which Cousin Lovett has suffered under for 1715.  
some days. [They are threatened with another change, as 'The  
China woman' has taken their rooms.] Cousen Denton came in  
and bids me tell your Lordship that the Parliament won't doe  
busines till after Xmas, I would have greeted him by the name of  
Solicitor Generll. but he says he knows nothing of the matter, nor  
of his marrying."

"My Lord, — I choose this day to congratulate your happy 5 Nov.  
arrivall at 75, and my mother who is your humble servant joyns 1715.  
with me in wishing you may compleat a Hundred, if your health  
admitts of injoying comfort so long, and Mrs. Marsh sayd she's  
very glad you were born on so auspicious a day [the day William  
the Third landed in England], and Mrs. Lownds says next the  
deliverance from the Popish Plot your Birth was the greatest  
blessing. ... I writt to my Lady from Sherburne Lane, where  
we were mostly composed of the Halt, Lane & Sick, something  
resembling the feast in the Gospell, but I thank God I went well  
thither, tho' my too Plentifull eateing their good cheer I pd. for  
it severally at my return, and have not yet perfectly recovered it  
as I should wish. My Mother holds pretty well and by the strength  
of your Lordship's good cheer we both came off Victors at Play,  
which I may say is a wonder for me who have lately been beat by  
all I Plaid with. I suppose you heard from my Cos. Lloyd that her  
Brr. is dead at Chester [Humphrey Lloyd] I am glad Death took  
Em in order, the Eldest before the younger. I heard Ld. Cobham  
is summoned to town to goe for Scotland, which is hard upon a  
new married man."



Mrs. Adams recovered for a time, and Margaret continued to live with Lady Fermanagh at Chelsea, and Isabella, her sister, with Mrs. Stone at Brightwell.

Margaret's presence was always desired in sickness. Lady Cave, writing from Stanford, has conveyed her cousin to a sick friend clamorous for her company. She writes:

"... Sister Lovett received your letter and with her serviceable salutes to all thanks you for it. Last Satyrday I carried Cousin [Margaret] Adams and left her with Mrs. Cole, who has long been importuning for her company, Mrs. Cole being ill of a fever and none but servants with her, and a friendly companion in Sicknesse may be esteemed a Safety as well as a Comfort."

The Rev. W. Vickers had borne witness to her mother's popularity several years ago:

"... Aunt Adams neither wants mony nor presants, her knocker is worne out with the Carriers comeing to the Doore—hogsheads of strong Bear—Brawn, Turkeys, Geese, with Fowls etc., come to her from Calflande."

In the last days of the year 1721 Aunt Adams passed away. She was the last of the twelve children of Sir Edmund Verney, the Standard-Bearer, and was only nine years old when he was killed at the Battle of Edgehill. Her strong will, and her determination to assert it, were troublesome traits in the youngest of a large family, and she scorned to take the good advice which her elder sisters lavishly bestowed upon her. But her caustic remarks, which were pert at eighteen, were vastly witty at eighty-one, and as the lengthening procession of her birthdays came along, venison and wild duck, chickens and larks, were heaped upon her door-step, with their appropriate accompaniments of wine and liqueurs; her nephews and great-nephews with their children assured her that she was still in her teens, and applauded her skill at cards and the naïve gossip in her letters.

Aunt Adams had been famous for her housekeeping lore. She could make ratafia, though she could not spell it, and a more harmless decoction of cowslip wine, which "if kept in a cool place would last till cowslips come again".

Her great-nieces, widows themselves, Mary Lovett and Margaret Cave, helped the old widow to keep a roof over her head by often sharing her lodging. When with all her loudly lamented aches and pains she had passed her eighty-eighth birthday, Aunt Adams was

valued as an ancient monument, and a storehouse of long-forgotten things. Perhaps her best action was the bringing of Catherine Paschall to Claydon.

There is a brief entry in a letter of Ralph's to his Steward: "My Aunt Adams is to be buried at Baddow to-day." 2 June 1722.

Although their mother's claims upon them had often been troublesome, yet her death left Margaret and Isabella more than ever homeless.

Isabella had acted for some time as waiting gentlewoman to Mrs. Stone, who confided to her sister in 1736 that she would like to part with her, if this could be managed with kindness. Lady Fermanagh, who had been the one of the family to care for the two sisters, readily undertook to make the desired arrangements, although at the moment she was unusually full of company in connection with her son's engagement. She writes to her sister:

"... Finding by your letter that you have some reasons against my Cousin [Adams] staying much longer with you, I am very ready to take care of her whenever you think fit to have her leave you. But as our House is very full already and we have not conveniences for the family, that is and must be in it, and if our present affairs goes on as I hope it will. . . . I can't tell where we shall goe, or what we shall doe till that is over, and should be glad if I could board her anywhere, I paying for it, I have writ to try Mrs. Bluett, who has houseroom enough, but wherever you send her she shall be here till I can get a place fitt for her, I will write to my Cozen Starkey to know if she will take her." 4 May 1736.

But before any change could be carried out for Isabella, Catherine Verney writes to acquaint her and Mrs. Stone of Margaret's death, after only a few hours' illness:

"She has left her sister and my Lady Cave executors, my Lady Cave has taken care of her funeral, she is to be buried at Baddow as near her father and mother as she can." 8 June 1736.

Lord and Lady Fermanagh had just returned from visiting Mrs. Stone at Brightwell. Catherine writes again of the death of her Cousin Adams:

"She was I believe a very sincere true friend, and a very just good woman. It grieves me to think of the surprise and concern you underwent who were so kind to her. My Mamma and Sister is gon to London to buy their things." 23 June 1736.

She thanks Mrs. Stone for the presents sent her by her sister, and ends with the duties and services of "My Papa and Mamma and both my Brothers".

1 July  
1736. Elizabeth Verney writes her thanks for favours received at Brightwell. "Cousin Adams has left no other Will than the paper we found, so that Cozen Vickers and Cousin Lloyd as her nearest relations comes in for what is left." Lady Fermanagh has paid for the funeral expenses, but would not have it known.

The older of the Claydon and Hillesden cousins were fast falling away.

Alexander Denton writes very gratefully to Lord Fermanagh, for the goodness and care he and Lady Fermanagh devoted to

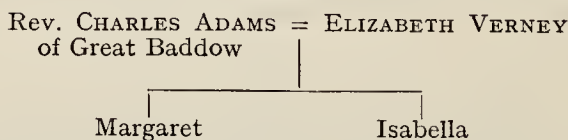
Dec.  
1739. "Sister Boate, who I am afraid neglected herself and perhaps was lost for want of due care in the beginning of her illness. . . . I cannot say I am much the better for the country, though my spirits and appetite are better but my pains are very violent. It is generally said that Mr. Vaux will sell his estates but I dare not inquire after it for he would sell it to another for a less price than to a friend of mine; and all his disgust to me proceeds from a resentment that I did not continue with him in the places his father had from me to his death, but as I never could see any good qualities in him, I did not think he deserved anything from me."

Lord Fermanagh replies that he had been with Mrs. Boate a few days before her death:

11 Dec.  
1739. "She was sitting up in bed and looked well and cheerful and said twas only pains in her limbs which she was so much used to that she did not greatly mind it. Mrs. Sherard and the Doctor did as much as they durst venture to do and as much as she would consent to.

I am glad you have found benefit by Hilsden's sweet air, and hope your pains will cease quite." A sanguine wish for that gouty age.

#### ADAMS PEDIGREE



## CHAPTER XXIX

### A SECOND SON

RALPH VERNEY, the second son of Ralph and Catherine, was born at Baddow, on February 1, 1714. It was probably to his advantage in after-life that he was never considered as important as his elder brother. When the family were in London in the winter of 1719–20 John went with them, and after many inquiries was put in school at Fulham. Ralph was left for the time being with the Rector of Claydon, having not quite reached his seventh birthday. Good Mr. Butterfield is highly satisfied with his management of little Ralph.

“My Lord,—I can no longer contain my Joy for our good Success hitherto with that dear Pledge you have left in our Hands. He is in perfect Health and seems well-content with his Company, and the sweetness of his Temper and Vivacity of Spirit, joyn’d with the Innocency of his Age, renders him the delight of all about him. He lyes in a little Room hung with Paper, which is a sort of Alcove within ours, so that we are near at hand upon any occasion; and he has a Bedfellow, as my Lady directed, but I hope his good Angel, or rather that Eye of Providence, which neither slumbers nor sleeps, will be his continual Guard. After Prayers and Dressing, betwixt the Book and the Top and other Diversions, the hours pass smoothly and not unprofitably away; so that tho’ he is everyone’s Care and concerne, he is a Trouble to none. He pleases himself with imagination of his Brother’s being cooped up in a little house whilst he has the liberty of ranging the Garden and the Fields, and of Church-Days has the sole Ringing of the Bell, and the whole property of the News-Papers. He was in great expectation of the Drum and Fiddle on Thursday night, and when the Carrier delivered the one broken and the other lyeing at the bottom of the Waggon, could not be come at, he bore the Disappointment with the Temper of a Philosopher.

9 Jan.  
1721.

My Ld., I return you and your very good Lady my acknowledgements for your accumulated Favours, which we cannot but retain a fresh sense of, while we daily tast and feel the Comfort



of them, and as I cannot make a more acceptable though unequal return for them, then by my care of my Charge, soe I shall not cease to add my Prayers to my Indeavours that at our next happy Meeting you may see the Fruits of it, in his proficiency in Learning as in Stature. He gives his humble duty to you both, and love to his Brother and Sisters."

It was not thought well to send the brothers to the same school. There were many private venture schools in the neighbourhood of London—at Hackney, Islington, and Highgate—which prepared boys for the universities without going to any public school. Lord Fermanagh's chief friend and adviser was Mr. Chilcott, a man in good society, who was given apparently an Honorary Degree at Cambridge. The syllabus of studies that he had prepared for quite young schoolboys is a tremendous and most unreasonable one, but it probably flourished chiefly on paper.

Ralph Palmer was also looking out for a school for his own son, another Ralph.

5 Apr.  
1721.

*Ralph Palmer to Lord Fermanagh*

"... My Spouse and I went to Brentford to view and discourse Mr. Le Hunt the Schoolmaster, and found all things so much to our satisfaction that we are fully preparing of putting Ralph thither immediately after Whitsuntide."

His experience of the Brentford school proved so satisfactory that Ralph Verney was sent to join Ralph Palmer. His school letters were not kept as John's were, but he maintained a good reputation for diligence. The old Rector took a great interest in his progress; the real kindness of his letter is somewhat lost in the fulsome style with which he addresses a schoolboy.

3 Aug.  
1723.

*Rev. W. Butterfield to the Hon. Ralph Verney*

"And can my sweet Little Man spare so much time from his Pastimes & his Book (which I hear is Such to Him) as to bestow a Line upon one who so little deserves a Thought? And is He so good as to Preffer an most acceptable Token of his kind Remembrance of me, who can boast of Nothing but the success of my poor Endeavours to teaching him letters, which was then over-payd? I hope that sober Drug you chose, will prove an Emblem of that sobriety entail'd on you from your Family. And I may assure myself that your diligent application under an excellent Preceptor will ensue the Expectation of your careful Parents. But tho' your Instruction in Letters be in other Hands, yet I shall take Leave as

Occation serves always to be the Member, or rather to applaud you. I should tire you did I give vent to what my Heart is full of toward you, but I hope a few Days home will bless us with the sight of you & the rest of the Family; I therefore release you at present; subscribing as I truly am, sweet youth, Yours in all service and Affection,

WM. BUTTERFIELD.

Mrs. Piggot's Coach brought your Aunt Verney safe to Claydon yesterday, and Sarah and her Child to us."

It is not very clear whether the Brentford school belonged to Mr. Chilcott, and whether Mr. Le Hunt acted under him. He seems to have been a clergyman with a parish of his own. Mr. Chilcott was well known in other walks of life, and his name occurs in many circles, educational, ecclesiastical, and political. For some years he supervised the Verney boys' progress at their schools.

If Lady Verney was not as well satisfied as the Rector was with the boys "proficiency in learning"—not to say that she was extremely dissatisfied both with teacher and learner—neither of them lived at a time when the solid advantages of a quiet, country life were appreciated. Ralph learnt to love such pleasures as were not in any scholastic programme—to have the sole privilege of ringing the parish to church; to run round with the Archdeacon to see whether the church Bible and Prayer Book were only undusted nests for spiders; to watch the repairs to the brick walls and thatched roofs on the estate; to help to unpack the carrier's miscellaneous load; to help him to remember the parcels on the Brew-house ledge; to collect the letters with the postman, which had been forgotten last Thursday, to his father's great displeasure; to hide with the keeper in a tree, while the deer were driven past him; to know the farm tenants, as more than names on a rent-roll; to be friends with Goody Webb and Good-man Grimes—in short, to know and love Claydon and its people, as his brother John had never a chance of doing. It was not so much that life in London lodgings, and later in their own house at Chelsea, was more confined in space, but that "the mode" in dress, manners, and amusements was so different and so arbitrary. John might come up to see His Grace of Marlborough's pompous funeral, while Ralph was pinching fat sheep by Mr. Millward's side at Winslow Fair, but there was no doubt of the comparative healthiness of their several lives.

If good Mr. Butterfield might doze over his pipe in the arbor

on a sunny afternoon, Ralph had plenty of friends to abet little Master's escape to milk the cows or help gather the peaches, which were going to be packed for his mother's dessert after a five-course dinner.

John at Fulham was vehemently desirous that his sword should be sent to his school, as he could go nowhere without it; we do not know what was "quite indispensable" to Ralph's appearance in public in his school; he probably addressed such requests to the Steward, who reported him at intervals as being well and happy.

Ralph has had a longer holiday than his fellows on account of a cough.

9 July  
1728.

*W. Chilcott, at Brentford Butts, to Lord F.*

"... Tis with pleasure I hear that my young gentleman has lost his cough; I began to think the Time of Grace long . . . but instead of putting your Lordship in mind I am to thank you for sending him me so soon. The Task I don't question is in good order, with the help of the supernumerary fortnight. Hanwell-Heath is the nearest place to us, where, at the Pied-Bull by the Bridge, I will take care to have somebody to receive him and attend him to Brentford."

27 July  
1728.

"I presume your Lordship has by Miss Kitty's letter heard that we have been to pay our Duty to Mr. Stone and his Lady; they promised Master to call upon him in their Way into Oxfordshire. My Scholar I thank God continues in very good health, and is I think mended pretty much in his hearing. As we were at the Coffee-House one came in and said . . . that Mr. Hampden, Member for Buckinghamshire, was dead at Hampton Court this morning after an Illness of three or four days. . . . I thought it my Duty to acquaint your Lordship of it as an early notice of it might be of service, if not you will be so good as to excuse the Trouble my Officiousness may have given you."

Richard Hampden had been returned to Parliament the year before, with Sir Wm. Stanhope.

"... I suppose your Lordship will in the papers today see the death of Dr. Friend [Frewin] your physician."

While his two sons were at Cambridge, Lord Fermanagh managed his estate chiefly by correspondence with his steward.

27 Oct.  
1733.

Long accounts of the trees felled in the woods, of the state of the farms, of new leases granted, of defaulting tenants, and of the stock of the home-farm, continue to be sent from Claydon to Lord



Fermanagh at Chelsea; but by the autumn John Millward's signature takes the place of Charles Chaloner's, without any other notice of the change, or whether Chaloner has died or has retired—probably the former.

*Sir Thomas Cave, 5th Baronet, to Lord Fermanagh*

27 Nov.  
1737.

"My Lord,—I have this day killed a Doe and I beg your Lordship's acceptance of half of it. There is a haunch directed to Uncle Palmer with your Lordship's; Stanford soil being Cold, we do not boast of our Winter Venison.

Tomorrow we have a general meeting at Leicester to nominate a Candidate in room of Mr. Phillips. I hope we shall have no Opposition. My wife and sister with Captain V. Lovett, who is now with us, join in greeting my Lady and your Lordship, and respects to the young Ladies."

His sister Betty writes the next day that Sir Thomas has set out for Leicester, but they have heard that an accident happened to the Coach, and so the Venison must be sent by the wagon, to the windmill in St. John Street, Smithfield. The carrier's name is Biggs.

28 Nov.  
1737.

Ralph was entered as a Fellow Commoner at Christ's Coll., Cambridge, April 30, 1732, and took an M.A. degree in 1736; the family reports were always of his steady industry.

A successful university career was more important to Ralph than to John, and he was showing a good deal of character.

Lord Fermanagh writes to Millward to stop selling Ale at Bottle Claydon, but he is loath to sink the Inn at East Claydon for nothing:

"It sunk once in my time already, would not Holton who has the License take the Inn, which will put an end to that he holds at Bottle Claydon. They wish to have a Dog Tumbler<sup>1</sup> to Chelsea if she could be safely sent up, but she must not be tied behind the wagon; it cutt Bell's feet to pieces. But if the Carrier can put her in any of his baskets in the wagon you may send her up."

9 Dec.  
1737.

". . . I have sent a paper called Common Sense; the Craftsman was stopped printing so none came out."

16 Dec.  
1737.

Sir Thomas Cave writes:

". . . I hope the next news from Abroad will be still more agreeable than the last, as the Glory of it seems a little Tarnisht at present as well as the Splendour of Old England."

<sup>1</sup> A spotted pointer.



The military news was bad, the previous November the *Craftsman* was asking

"Whether the English behaved as usual and carried off our wounded, or left them to the enemy? Whether we fought and ran away—ran away and fought not?—whether fought nor ran away—or fought and ran not? Whether their officers led them on and set them an example which they seemed to follow—or whether they set their officers an example which they scorn'd to follow? Whether somebody's or anybody's courage ran away with him into the enemy's lines? . . . Whether the Glories of this first Campaign had cost Britain a Million more than any of Marlborough's used to cost, and much more blood, to purchase a few ragged Standards, Colours, and Kettledrums. . . . I should wish a Historian to be ordered to re-call the Glorious Victories of the next Campaign, having a number of Clerks and a Waggon."

No wonder the circulation of the *Craftsman* had been stopped, if it published such unpleasant questions.

Mrs. Isted writes from Ecton to Lord Fermanagh that Mr. Isted has just returned from Cambridge,

10 Aug.  
1735.

"where he had the pleasure of waiting upon Mr. Ralph Verney. . . . He has a most extraordinary character of being not only a very sober Gentleman, but he is esteemed a mighty hard student, which is a wonderful thing, for I fear there is but very few that apply themselves as they ought to their studdys, and therefore I rejoiced to hear it of Mr. Verney and think you are very happy in him. . . . Mr. Isted (who was at Trinity College, Oxford) is come home for the vacation; he seems delighted with a University life. He and the rest of my family joynes in most humble service as due."

11 Dec.  
1735.

*Hon. Ralph Verney, from Cambridge, to his Father, at Chelsea*

"Hond. Sir,—I had my Degree on Friday last. Our Master has Opposed it as strenuously as he possibly could, till he saw his opposition was to no purpose, and then (after he had exposed himself in a most scandalous manner) absconded. You must have heard what Confusion and Divisions he has made both in the University and in College. The University Dispute is between the Heads of the Colleges and the Young Masters of Arts; the latter claiming the sole Power of electing a Proctor, which the former will not allow of. They are very warm on both sides and there is scarce any Prospect of a Reconciliation at present. In this and all party Affairs I am Neuter. I have now done all the Business that is required of me here and propose (with your consent) to keep the next Term at the Temple. It can be no hindrance to my taking of Holy Orders at

any Time, and it may be of Service in many Respects. Mr. Law came into it entirely upon mentioning of it to him, and said he thought it the most prudent way of acting. The law is certainly by far the most valuable Profession, if I have but Health and Resolution to go through with it, which makes me very desirous of attempting it. But 'tis my Duty, and consequently I shall with Pleasure stand to your Determination in this Affair.

Mr. Finch has made a Appeal which will be tryed very soon in College and 'tis generally thought that he will be restored to his Fellowship.

The Chappel Bell now rings. With Duty to Mama and Love to Brother and Sisters, I must conclude this from Your most dutiful son,  
RALPH VERNEY."

The Verneys were all fond of music, and a gentleman was still expected to be able to play some instrument, and to read his score at sight in a glee and a part song.

*Doctor J. Watson, Hatton Garden, to Lord Fermanagh*

17 Feb.  
1736.

"My Lord,—My Successor in the Stewardship, Doctor Pelling, having sent me a ticket to pleasure any friend with, I am not willing to dispose of it till I know whether your lordship or Mr. Verney will accept it.

Here are likewise two tickets for your chois on the same day which are at Lady Fermanagh's service. But if it suits you not to make use of them please to return them by the Bearer for in that case they are engaged."

*Lord Fermanagh to Mr. Millward*

28 Mar.  
1738.  
1 Apr.  
1738.

". . . The Almshouse savings should be divided as usual when you think most proper. . . . I hope they kill nothing in the woods but foxes, when they come a-hunting, the woodward should see to that."

*Richard Abell to Lord Fermanagh*

9 Mar.  
1738.

". . . As I was dragging Padbery stream I remembered your Lordship once declared your Approbation of Padbery Eels. My wife and self, therefore, desire your acceptance of a brace of Padbery-Jacks, hoping they will rival the Eels in sweetness."

The Claydon neighbours are not forgotten when the family are absent. Lord Fermanagh sends down a hamper of wine—one dozen of Madeira for Mr. Butterfield, another dozen for Millward, a dozen of sack in quarts for Parson Green, a dozen pints of mountain wine

22 Dec.  
1738.

for Cousin Starkey, and six pints of the same for Mrs. Chaloner, to add to their Christmas cheer. The postman is to have the usual Christmas box.

Ralph, who has become, since his brother's death, a more important member of the family, writes to his father from Cambridge:

16 Oct.  
1737.

"Sir Ed. Lawrence was with me last week; he came to meet Mr. Bromley, who was then made the Mayor's freedman. Ld. Lincoln is admitted to Clare Hall, where the Duke of Newcastle our High Steward intends to reside. Tis reported that Lord Oxford's Estates in this County are upon sale, as likewise Mr. Pemberton's, at Trumpeton (Trumpington), who has I believe reduced himself very low. Tho' your kind Indulgence in a late Affair was rejected by me, yet I hope twill cause no displeasure between us, which would give me the utmost concern. I shall conclude with Duty to Mamma, and Love to Sisters, Your most Dutyfull son,  
R. VERNEY."

Ralph writes to Millward:

27 Aug.  
1739.

"My Lord will answer your letters as soon as he returns from Brightwell. Mr. Green's scruples of conscience have been rais'd by the son whom (if I may be allowed the expression) takes a delight in being contentious."

12 May  
1739.

There is a correspondence with Mr. Green about the enclosures and titles of East Claydon; the Bishop of Lincoln (Reynolds), who has been referred to, thinks Lord Fermanagh's proposals very good for the vicar, and his consent is finally obtained.

8 June  
1739

Dick Bates is to stay in Claydon House every other Sunday, that Mrs. Challoner may go to church. In June of this year a fire broke out in the adjacent village of Marsh Gibbon, which strongly appealed to the sympathy of their neighbours.<sup>1</sup>

Bells were pealing at Claydon for the birthday of its oldest inhabitant. Mr. Millward writes:

26 July  
1740.

"... Yesterday the old Parson entered into the ninetieth year of his age and kept a great Birthday."

Ralph had determined that he himself and not his father should choose his wife.

We know from the *Gentleman's Magazine* that she was Mary, "daughter of Henry Herring, Esqre., of Mincing Lane, with a fortune of £40,000—in fact, much more. She was a most excellent

<sup>1</sup> The correspondence about it was published as a paper in the Records of Bucks, with the Notes of the Editor (vol. xii., 1927).



woman, she bore her misfortunes with the greatest magnanimity and readily parted with her money and even her jewels at times when Lord Verney was pressed." "The estates were settled on Miss Verney, only child of his elder brother, but the reversion in fee if she had no heir was in his own power."

There is no account of his courtship, but the bride proved herself an excellent wife for over fifty years. They were married on the 11th September 1740—Mary aged 24, Ralph two years her senior.

*Sir Thomas Cave to Lord Fermanagh (from Stanford)*

15 Sept.  
1740.

"My Lord,—I yesterday received your Lordship's letter with the welcome news of Mr. Verney's marriage; and take this first opportunity of wishing your Lordship and Lady Fermanagh Joy of the New Alliance; and hoping it will be attended with all Imaginable Happiness and Prosperity. I must repeat my concern for my two fair Cousins, and beg of them not to be cruel to their Devotees any longer, but to joyn in the circle of their married Relations, that we may be all of one mind in One House. My wife joyns with me in Congratulations.—Your most dutiful Nephew and Obedient Servant,

THOMAS CAVE."

*Hon. Mary Lovett, in London, to her Brother, Lord Fermanagh,  
at Claydon*

16 Sept.  
1740.

"... On Saturday evening I paid my compliments of Joy to the Bride and Bridegroom, and I hope, Dear Brother, the like compliment will find acceptance from you and my Sister, who I hope, will have all satisfaction and Happiness that is possible from so good and great A work. I also wish the young ladies, and indeed every part and degree of the family, a lasting Joy and Comfort in Mr. Verney's and his Lady's, and the same to them from it. I must add to my Joy the Obligations I am under for your great favour to my son, which I shall ever think, and I hope he too, that it will produce the desired effect. I believe it will be followed this week by a recommendation from Commissioner Vanbrugh, which will perhaps keep him in memory. Betty and he desires their duties may be acceptable with their Joy, and congratulations on this occasion are sincerely offered with all other respects and salutes as due from, dear Brother, your truly affectionate sister,

M. LOVETT."

Lady Cave congratulates her brother on his son Ralph's marriage to Miss Herring; and Sir Thomas Cave writes his good wishes the same day.

15 Sept.  
1740.



"A Memorandum.—Thursday, the 11th day of Sept. 1740, my dear Bror. Ralph was married to Miss Mary Herring, at White Hall Chapel; he gave the Parson twenty guineas and the Clerk one guinea."

16 Sept.  
1740.

Besides sister Mary Lovett, the unmarried sister, Elizabeth Verney, sends her congratulations.

Catherine (Paschall) had shown a great deal of vivacity and initiative at various times of her life. As a motherless girl, she had managed the estate and household in Essex; had looked after her father and sister, the friendly rector and the parish; and had made a niche for her husband at Baddow, and done her best to transfer herself later to Claydon. Her energy was remarkable in settling in their Chelsea house, in spite of two illnesses, without neglecting her husband's political interests in Bucks; it seemed to reach its height when her beloved son John was to be married.

She exerted herself to take the young people to Court, and in her anxiety to do them honour, she carried out a number of entertainments, usually undertaken by the bride's relations, to bring the two families together. She collapsed after the wedding, but revived to share in all her son's new interests—and his death broke her heart. There could not be a repetition of the former wedding-feasts, whatever was needed must be done by the parents' of Ralph's bride, and he was quite content to have it so. There was no smart honeymoon at Tunbridge Wells, but after a short interval, Lady Fer-managh prepared to receive the bridal pair at Claydon.

Ralph's first visit to Claydon with his bride was October 3, 1740, with Mr., Mrs., and Miss Herring.

He was about to start when he writes to his father:

27 Sept.  
1740.

"... Mrs. Jenkins has just sent to acquaint me that Cousin Vickers is ill and not likely to hold but a few days. ... Mrs. Jenkins desires to know what must be done with Cous. Vickers in case she drops."

30 Sept.  
1740.

"Hond. Sir,—[he writes again] I have been at Burr Street and found Cous. Vickers dead. She expired last night. Mrs. Jenkins and Mr. Brown were together, she sent for me and desired to know what must be done with her. I told her the contents of your letter and she seem'd well satisfyed, upon which she shew'd her Will, wherein she has left you sole Executor. She has left Mama her Olive Wood Cabinet and Legacies to all the family."

He writes to his father at Claydon that he is buying wine-

glasses, and champagne, claret and burgundy from Mr. Herring's wine merchant, to send to him by the "Winslow Carrier". He and his bride are coming to Claydon in Mr. Herring's coach.

He continues the next day:

"... I received yours this evening. There will be ten Coach Horses, four Saddle Horses and Mr. Herring Coachman and Butler. We shall set out tomorrow after dinner for Uxbridge, and on Friday propose to be at Claydon. I had forgot to mention that my Wife's maid will come down with us. With my Wife's and my Duty to yourself and Mama and Love to Sisters, I must beg leave to subscribe myself, Your most dutyfull Son,  
R. VERNEY." 1 Oct.  
1740.

The young Mr. and Mrs. Verney being duly installed at Claydon, and having performed his part in the last offices of kindness to Penelope Vickers, it now remained for Lord Fermanagh to carry out the conditions of her will, as the sole executor. Penelope's last will was a generous one. She left half her income, a sum bearing £200 a year, to keep her husband's name alive in his native place by founding a Vickers Charity "towards putting out apprentices to some honest trade or employment, such of the poor Children belonging to the Parish of Davenham, near Nantwich in the County of Chester, where her husband's father was born".

There are business letters in February and March of 1744 about money matters of the Earl of Albemarle, and of five hundred pounds owing to Earl Verney by the 3rd Earl of Cholmondeley, which is eventually paid, but not fully for some months.

*Lord Cholmondeley to Earl Verney*

31 Mar.  
1744.

Docketed as "received on Saturday, 31st March 1744, about half past four a clock in the afternoon, a few hours after war was proclaimed against France."

"My Lord,—I am ashamed to have kept your servant so long to no purpose, but I have met with such trifling frivolous usage as makes me mad. Our bills from Cheshire are generally drawn upon the Great Cheesemongers here in Town, that commodity being the greatest produce of our country. When I set up this morning two bills which were due this day . . . after keeping my servant several hours they put him off till Thursday next saying that they had so many bills drawn of late upon them that it would be Thursday before they could pay them, for that they were apprehensive to Shipp's loaden with Cheses and from Chester were taken. If they do not pay it I must protest them but that I was willing to take

this last Tryal not to delay your Lordship. If they disappoint me I will take up money of a friend rather than make your Lordship waite much longer."

Another letter from Lord Cholmondeley to Lord Verney is docketed,

25 May  
1744.

"and in it a Bank Note of £300 for my three quarters annuity due on the 24th June 1743 delivered by one of his Livery servants 25th May 1744."

"My Lord—Inclosed I send you £300, and should have paid you but for the Unfaithfull and ungenerous disappointment of an acquaintance to whom I had lent a sum—together with a draft that came upon me from Genoa for a large parcell of Damask Furniture for my Building at Richmond. Having had no previous notice the Letter of Advice and Bill coming by the same post (although the Letter of Advice was dated fifteen days before the Bill), owing I imagine to troubles in that neighbourhood and the War with France. I trouble you with these particulars to obtain your Excuse for this unforeseen disappointment, and shall not fail to pay the remainder as soon as in my power, which will not be long."

7 Apr.  
1744.

*Sir Thomas Cave to Earl Verney*

"My Lord,—I am glad to hear of no complaints under your Roof. For my Part I have so great a Paine in my left Shoulder and Knee that I can hardly do anything, and in the Night am not able to turn myselfe in Bed without a sharp Jogg of it, I imagine it to be a touch of the Rheumatism, contracted in the late very severe and wet weather. If the Call is postponed I hope the above is excuse enough for my absence, be it when it will. My Affairs with Her Grace seem to stay now only with her Council, an agreeable report having been made to her from the second survey."

Ralph, who was very fond of Claydon, was quite ready to make his home there, and to save his father any trouble about the estate with the aid of their invaluable friend and steward, Mr. Millward. But the parents had scarcely departed, when a grievous accident upset these arrangements.

11 Nov.  
1740.

*Ralph Verney, at Claydon, to Lord Fermanagh, at Chelsea*

"Hond. Sir,—We were extreamly glad to know of your safe arrival at Chelsea & know not how to make a sufficient return for the many favours which we have received from you & Mamma. . . . There was an unhappy accident last night, Mr. Millward on return-



ing to his own house, from the Inn at East Claydon, where there is a Musicck Club instituted, fell down & broke the Master Bone & another smaller Bone of his Leg. The fracture is about the Middle of the Small of his Leg. Mr. Turland of Addington has set 'em, & thinks there will be no hazard of its doing well. I advised him to send to Bicester for the other Brother which I fear he don't intend, this Surgeon advising him against it. His Fall was in the Middle Way between East & Bottle Claydons & about half an hour after eleven o'clock at night, & he was forced to crawl to the end of Bottle Claydon town before he could get any assistance to carry him home. He is in all appearance as well as could be expected, for one under his Misfortune. It is very inconvenient at this Juncture of Time & will without doubt be a long time before he will be able to stirr. I will endeavour to make up the Loss to the best of my ability, in inspecting the Workmen & seeing there is no Wast committed. Eland's stable is blown down & he has no place to put a horse into. . . . If you think it necessary that there should be one built, it will be best to postpone it upon account of Mr. Millward."

Ralph thought that it would be quite an easy matter to undertake the steward's duties, but when a storm came and destroyed a tenant's barn, he discovered that it was not so simple a thing to supply the want of training and experience, and he suggested that the matter should remain in abeyance till Mr. Millward could get about again.

This experience he gained by degrees as he continued to live on at Claydon House, and took a practical interest in farming and building and landscape gardening.

The household were not always amenable—Ralph writes to his father:

"My butler has behaved very saucily to Mrs. Verney upon which I gave him warning to leave me the day before yesterday. Wife returns thanks for the fine flounders, which came very sweet." 8 Nov. 1741.

". . . We are now very well serv'd with Fish of all sorts and tolerably reasonable twice a week. Lobsters one shilling per pound, trouts fourteen pence and other fish such as Plaice, Maids, Souls, etc., we give according to the size of em. There are 2 men who bring em from Oxford very fresh, and serve about half a score families." 15 Sept. 1743.

There had been long-drawn-out negotiations for the sale of the Manor House, the adjacent farms and the Advowson at Thornborough. The calculation of ages affected the price demanded; the vicar, Mr. Townsend, was found to be regrettably sober—"he



always drinks warm water but is very temperate—she is near 50 years of age”. But “warm water” is felt to be an aggravation of a doubtful virtue.

19 Oct.  
1746.

*Lord Fermanagh to Earl Verney*

“... Mrs. Townsend ask'd for the Great Tithes of Thornborough for the Advowson and Manor £1500 for the reversion after Mr. Townsend's life. . . . I told her I believ'd she was a stranger to such purchase by setting so extravagant a Price upon it . . . Mr T. told me he would advise her to sell the whole outright.”

The young couple are showing the necessary hospitalities to relations and neighbours; her sister and his sisters pay them long visits, but the letters are more than ever insistent that the older people should spend more time at Claydon. The new mistress was somewhat of an invalid during those years, but she liked Claydon, and her parents, who were not infrequent visitors, greatly appreciated that their daughter should have so beautiful a home, though for the time she was not completely mistress of it; but Mr. and Mrs. Herring were ready to facilitate their present occupancy of a house too large for their immediate requirements, to the extent of £500 a year.

Only one incident occurred which might have marred these happy if somewhat complicated arrangements. Lord Verney and his son were agreed in the policy of investing their money in land, and whenever a neighbouring estate came into the market they were keen to purchase it, especially if their cousins at Stowe were also ready to bid for it. It occurred to the parents at Chelsea that the young people might live more cheaply in the small house at Thornborough than in a part of the large house at Claydon. It was not very graciously put, and considering how carefully Ralph was looking after his father's property and doing the duties Earl Verney no longer cared to fulfil—the proposal might well have given offence. But the son took it in the best possible way. He made careful estimates of their housekeeping and agreed that in some respects they might live more cheaply at Thornborough, but he wrote to his father:

4 Oct.  
1746.

“... By putting some chairs and tables into the Parlour, and fixing a bed for ourselves and some for the servants, we might go into it this winter. I may venture to say that we have as few superfluous Expenses as anybody. . . . In short, the only Point that

wants Determination, is whether it is prudent to incur the Displeasure of my Wife's Relations, and totally reject the Prospect of all future favours. Should we be disinherited, would not the World disapprove our Conduct and Procedure, and think us rightly served for not complying with their Requests? But if you think otherwise, I will never more mention this disagreeable subject."

Nor does it seem to have been again alluded to on either side.

## CHAPTER XXX

### BLUE SKY AND A THUNDERBOLT

THE next few years after Ralph and Mary Fermanagh had settled down at Claydon passed peacefully enough. Ralph's letters to his father are chiefly about local things; he is devoting himself to the garden and the woods—he greatly appreciates a copy of a letter sent to him by one of his Churchill cousins, written by the great Minister, Sir Robert Walpole, after his political defeat and retirement.

Sir Robert Walpole (now Earl of Orford) writes from his country home at Houghton to Major-General Churchill:

24 June  
1743.

"Dear Charles,—This place affords no News, No subject of amusement to fine Gentlemen. Men of Witt & Pleasure about Town, understand not the Language, Nor Taste the Charms, of the Inanimate World, My Flatterers are all Mutes, the Oakes, the Beeches, the Chestnutts seem to Contend which shall best please the Lord of the Manor. They cannot deceive, they will not Lye, I in return with Sincerity admire them & have as many Beauties about me as fill up all my Hours of Dangling, And no Disgrace attends Me from 67 Years of Age. Within Doors we come a little nearer to and Admire upon the almost Speaking Canvas all The Airs and Graces which the prouder of the Town Ladys can boast off, with These I'm satisfy'd, Because they Gratify me with all I wish, & all I Want, and Expect Nothing in Return which I cannot Give. If these, Dear Charles, are Any Temptations, I heartily Invite You to Come & Partake of them, Shifting the Scene has sometimes its Recommendations, and from Country fair You may possibly Return With a Better Appetite to the Moore Delicate Entertainments of a Refined Life. Since I wrote this we have been surprised With the Good News from abroad, too much cannot be said upon it, for it is truly Matter of Infinite Joy because of Infinite Consequence.—I am truly, Dr. Charles, yours most affectionat,

ORFORD."

The good news referred to the Battle of Dettingen, in which George II. had played a fortunate part.

Ralph asks for nothing better.

The game of cricket was just coming into fashion and was viewed with considerable suspicion by the old-fashioned gentry of the County; the description of one of the first cricket matches held by Mr. Grenville at Wootton, in August 1741, might have been the account of a modern crowd. Ralph Verney has no sympathy with it.

"There was near six thousand people at the great cricket match yesterday. These matches will soon be as pernicious to Poor People as Horse Races, for the contagion spreads. Duke of Bedford lost all the matches. I have heard no particular account of the company." 27 Aug. 1741.

Horace Walpole found that his predecessor, Lord John Sackville, at Twickenham, had "instituted certain games called Cricketalia, which have been celebrated this very evening in honour of him in a neighbouring meadow".

"Pernicious" or not, cricket had come to stay.

Ralph continues to forward to his father Millward's report of the farms and the constant applications from the Clergy. He writes:

"Hond. Sir . . . Lord Cobham's Steward hang'd himself soon after the Assizes, he has left 4 or 5 children behind him. He was reputed an Atheist and was a great favourite of Lord C. He was uneasy at Mr. D——'s conviction of the Deer Stealer and used Mr. D—— at the Assize not so civilly as he should upon which he complained to Lord C. who reprimanded him for it, which vex'd him so much that he made away with himself. . . . Mr. Abell went away last Monday with another Load of Goods, which he valued at £500 and was overturned at Oveing Hill and receiv'd a great deal of damage. The Waggon was overloaded and he was forced to hire another Waggon and Horses and divide his Load into two Loads. He had another Load of goods overturned at Agmondesham where he lost some fine old China. He fish'd the Pond in Addington Bushes and took out several fine Tench and about 5 or 6 brace of Jacks and I believe he will leave none behind him anywhere. . . . I asked em leave to fish at Mr. White's pond, and drew out 39 brace of Carp, several of which were about 16 inches long." 23 Aug. 1741.

He discusses on what terms Mr. Abel should quit some land.

"Nothing fatts sheep so soon as Rye Grass and Trefoil for the first three years after it is sown." 8 Oct. 1741.



11 Oct.  
1741. "Sister Kitty has come on a visit. Lord Wenham is going to enclose Twyford this year. We shall finish our Wheat seeding."

18 Oct.  
1741.  
22 Oct.  
1741. Mr. Abel's sale is going on at the White House, and we are trying the "best methods of making a hedge of crabs and quickset between East Claydon and Granborough".

Sir Simon Bennet's charity at Beachampton:

25 Oct.  
1741. "... The last Act of Parliament about the regulation of Carriages gives great Uneasiness to the Country. The farmers are obliged to buy new Wheelles which is unlucky for East Claydon at this time."

5 Nov.  
1741. "We shan't begin Quicksetting till Monday. Tis a very sickly time with the Poor People, who are in a very poor Starving Condition, especially at East Claydon where the Poor begin to be very numerous."

8 Nov.  
1741. "The Great Tithe I believe does not belong to me, it was formerly let at £102 per annum and afterwards at £100 per an. which was all given away in charity, and I believe all great Tithes are obliged to repair the Chancel unless there be lands settled to indemnify them which I don't take to be the Case here."

31 Dec.  
1741. "... Captain Saunders of Brille died last week. Mr. Souldern is bit in the Sale of his House at Souldern as are several tradesmen round about. The Pretended Purchaser was discovered by Mrs. Purefoy of Shawson [Shalston] to whom twas said he was Related. He proves to be an Attorney's Cleark worth nothing and is gone off. He had got Lord Cobham's Gardener to lay out the Gardens, and a Master Builder was agreed with to new front the house, and treated everybody very handsomely, but with what design nobody knows. He had had goods from several Tradesmen, who will be losers by him, particularly a Silversmith, who had deliver'd a large Quantity of Plate. He had likewise employed the Attorney who drew the Writings for Southam's House to buy Steen and Stoke for him."

27 Dec.  
1741. "... Bailey Hughes, and some more desir'd that the land designed for them to occupy might not be sown with Clover. They say there is a venom in the bite of a sheep which stops its growth; and that seed lasts the least time of any, but this should be further considered of."

Rev'd. Anthony Cox, Reader of St. James's, Westminster, to Earl Verney, with a list of subscribers towards printing by subscription "The Grievous Hardships of the Inferior Clergy".

12 Nov.  
1746. "... He has no Design either to expose Religion or the Ministers of it any more than Eusebius, Socrates, and Ruffinus among the Ancient,—or Dupin, Cave and Collyer among the Modern . . . but

only to give a true, full and lively Account of the present oppressed and deplorable Condition of the Inferior Clergy, the whole to be comprised in 2 vols. 8vo. to be stitch'd in blue paper sent to each subscriber, 6/- to be paid at first and 6/- more, when the books are delivered."

*Ralph Verney to his Father*

10 Jan.  
1742.

"... Mr. Rogers of Lethernborough came to dinner here to tell me of a Scheme for reducing the Poor Rate at Buckingham, which is grown very high. They have a work-house at Buckingham but the poor are never employed in it. They designed now, if they can raise a stock of money, to set up proper Tools in the Work-house for making Sailcloth and Sacking, and by this means they will this next year reduce above one-third of the rate. They propose to get £100 of each Member and that every Gentleman who has an estate in the parish shall subscribe to it in proportion to his estate, Mr. Rogers says they will all come into it.

Mr. Millward was at the monthly meeting at Buckm., where was the Mayor and Aldermen who meet in the Hall to settle the parish affairs once a month. They desired Mr. Millward to acquaint me that they are to raise £400 or £500 and unless I give £50 towards it they shall not be able to raise it. . . . I believe the Scheme is well laid and in 2 or 3 years the money will be re-paid by lowering the taxes, yet it happens at a very unlucky season for me. 'Tis the general Opinion that it will be very beneficial as the poor will be employed the whole year when they can have no other work. They have agreed with a Master Workman to undertake it.

Parrat the Shoemaker of Bottle Claydon desires to rent Warren's Farm at East Claydon and has offered £28 per annum but I told him I could not let him have it for that money."

Parrat agrees to pay £31 and gets the farm.

"Mrs. Verney is got very well and with Sister Kitty joins in duty and love. . . . Mrs. Herring desires her services."

"... Tom Hinton's house was broke open and robb'd of some Bacon and Bread. It was done while he was at market. Last Monday I entertain'd the Tenants of Middle Claydon and invited yours at Steeple Claydon, who all came and seem'd well pleased. I gave em a Sirloin of Beef and five Ribs roasted, four geese and 4 Plumb-Puddings. They behav'd very well and were very moderate both in eating and drinking, and came at one o'clock and went away at six. They drank in all but four dozen of Strong Beer and the rest was Ale.

3 Jan.  
1742.

Mrs. Verney and Sister join in duty and love. This morning Wife was taken ill again. I sent for Mr. Wallbank who has blounded

her and sent Mrs. Herring account of her case. I fear she is in some danger of her last misfortune."

He writes two days later:

5 Jan.  
1742.

"'Tis with great concern that I send you the disagreeable account of Mrs. Verney's Illness. She was yesterday much worse and last night unhappily miscarried. She is as well as can be expected after it. Sister Kitty joins in duty and love. Your most dutyfull son.

R. VERNEY."

The only drawback to their happiness is in Mary Verney's delicate health.

So little is known of the necessary care and rest in such cases, that the poor young wife has only a series of disappointments. On this occasion her mother hastens to come to her.

Her husband writes again:

7 Jan.  
1742.

"I just now return'd from Wendover whence I fetched Mrs. Herring. She was to have been at Aylesbury but one of her horses was taken ill at Chalfont and she could get no futher than Wendover that night. My horses were at work in East Claydon fields when her letter came, which made it impossible to go for her last night, so I set out at 4 o'clock this morning. I did not take off the horses but staid an hour and see only Mr. Picton, Mr. Challoner and Mr. and Mrs. Hill. . . . Mrs. Verney continues mending and with Sister joins in duty and love."

When in the spring of 1743 she was recommended to try the waters at Tunbridge Wells, they are anxious that Lord and Lady Verney, with their daughters, shall join them there—a project which was happily carried out.

Ralph and Mary paid a visit to Mr. and Mrs. Herring at Chalfont, and from thence the next day to Claydon.

3 Feb.  
1743.

In a letter full of details of the farms this sentence occurs: "I congratulate you upon your new Honour", still addressing his father as Viscount Fermanagh.

5 Feb.  
1743.

There have been inquiries made about a Clock for the Courtyard at Claydon, apparently from Biddlesdon. "The great Clock has Iron Wheelles. A Clock with Iron Wheelles you thought not worth having I think."

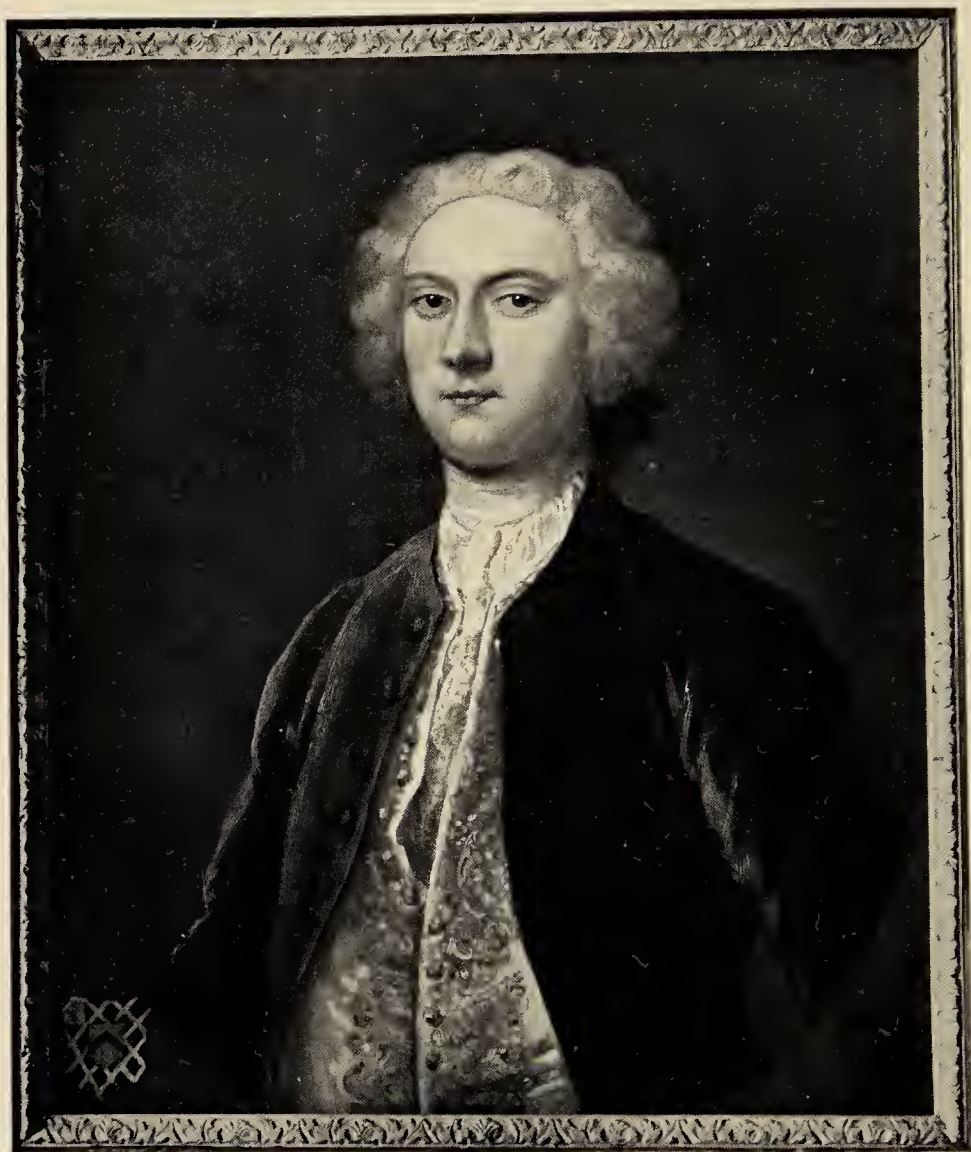
15 Feb.  
1743.

It had become known in the neighbourhood that Viscount Fermanagh had advanced to the rank of Earl Verney also in the Peerage of Ireland.

Lord Fermanagh writes to Mr. Millward:







Sir Thomas Cave, 5th Baronet.

"Mr. Millward. . . . I'm obliged to you and your neighbours for their wishes on the change of my name, and thank the Ringers at the three Claydon Churches and give to each set of em, as soon as you can after this comes to your hands, half a guinea to drink; that is half a guinea to East Claydon ringers and half a guinea to Middle Claydon ringers, them two if you think proper to be spent at the Swan at East Claydon, and half a guinea to the Ringers at Steeple Claydon to drink in their own town, for I would not direct them to spend it in another place. . . . With all our services to your family, I am, Your loving friend,  
FERMANAGH."

Ralph Verney and his wife have returned to Claydon, and he tells his father that he has taken a small house in the upper end of New Bond Street.

"Mr. Butterfield is ill of the gout. Mr. Abel has just been here but did not stay to sit down he goes for London. I enclose a letter to the Nurseryman at Chelsea Common about the Aspen Trees for the grove which I design to plant unless the season is too far advanced which I have desired him to inform me." 1 Mar.  
1743.

There had been a long-promised visit of Sir Thomas Cave and his wife to Claydon, but with the business of the House of Commons and Sir Thomas's various ailments it had been constantly postponed. His sister, Mrs. Pilsworth, being at Oving was another attraction.

*Sir Thomas Cave to Earl Verney*

8 June  
1745.

". . . Since I wrote last to your Lordship I have been under a little severe discipline of Blisters behind my Ears, and other medicinal applications for a swell'd face, attended with a slight fever . . . could I but perswade the Weather to be a little on the Summer Establishment, I am hopes my Cough would also leave me which is near of Kin to the Weather Glass, sympathising with all the changes of Weather. Poor Peggy too has frequent returns of her Illness . . . she would receive Benefit too, if the old Fashion'd Thing call'd Summer would make its appearance. . . . I wish Publick Affairs bore an equal good view with my Private ones, tho' I really have little hopes of any good attending them."

*Lord Fermanagh to Earl Verney*

9 June  
1745.

"Hond. Sir,—I received your kind letter on Friday. Upon Enquiry I find the Post left my letter in the Kitchen Window till Tuesday. I set out that morning early for Chadson, which is Mr. Newsham's Seat, about 3 miles beyond Edge Hill and within a mile of Keinton

and return'd that day. . . . In the new part of the House there is a Library between 50 and 60 feet long, 18 or 19 ft. wide and 27 ft. High, with a fret work ceiling. The house is situated at the bottom of the Hill almost, and before the House is a Paddock wall'd in with a very good Brick Wall, which will feed 40 Head of Deer, and has a large Canal in it, which is seen out of the House. It has a good up Prospect. . . . I hear some East India Merchants have cast Mr. Barker. What the consequence will be I know not, very likely he will be obliged to sell Saulden. Lord Limerick has cast Lane. When the Tryal came on Lane swore in Court to Expences for one year and quarter before the Election, after Lane had sworn to the Bill, Lord Limerick's Agent produced a Receipt in full from Tho. Lane to Lord Limerick, dated within 17 days of the Election, which put an end to the Suit. We have had heavy Rain all this week. Mr. and Mrs. Pillsworth were here on Thursday. Mr. Herring told me he could not come this year. . . . They are uneasy at Steeple Claydon about the Poors Taxes and are calling Vestryes to make alterations."

This letter was addressed to "The Earl of Verney", but Ralph did not change his own signature till the following July.

3 July  
1745.

"... You will meet a great number of Tradesmen upon the Road to solicit of your custome here; the Butcher and Baker have been pressing me to speak for em" [as if an Earl was likely to eat more than a Viscount!] With our duty to self and Mama, and love to Sisters, I remain your most dutyfull Son,  
FERMANAGH."

Lord Fermanagh reports a visit from the Rector of Dunton with his theological books.

11 Aug.  
1745.

"... Mr. Olyffe came here last Wednesday and stayd one night. He brought me two Octavo volumes of his works. I never heard the least of Sir K. Clayton's Troubles before I see it in the London Evening Post where tis constantly advertised. I fancy tis occasion'd by too great Frugality tho' we have not heard the least Syllable of it from any living soul. Have sent up by Clark 8 dozen of Apricots in a little Box. They are small this year, the cold spring having spoiled almost all garden produce. Mr. Herring comes next Friday."

His father and mother are pressed to come and meet the Caves.

The long-planned visit was accomplished in August, while Lady Catherine was with her brother. Why little Betty Cave should be commonly called "Sir John Norris" is not explained.

Lord Fermanagh writes:



“ . . . Sir Thomas and Lady Cave, Miss Rice, and Miss Betty, commonly called Sir John Norris. . . . They are to be at Leicester Races on Wednesday.” 15 Aug.  
1745.

The whole party is going over to Sir Thomas Lee’s; the visit lasts from Tuesday to Saturday.

*Lady Catherine Verney to her Father*

18 Aug.  
1745.

“Hond. Sir . . . Sir Thomas and Lady Cave had a great mind to see Sir Thos. Lee, so we went, and I think the gardens prodigious pretty. We call’d to see Sir Wm. Stanhope a coming back. The House is full of Workmen, I dont much like it, tis so under ground. He and my Lady are expected there next Sunday. She hasnt seen it yet.”

Lord Verney notes the fees Sir Thomas Cave gave to the Claydon servants:

Mrs. Heaver, the Housekeeper	.	.	10	6
John Miller, the Butler	.	.	10	6
The 2 housemaids, 5s. each	.	.	10	0
The Coachman	.	.	5	0
Tom, the Footboy	.	.	2	6
Total				£1 18 6

Before the Caves left, Mr. and Mrs. Herring arrived, Lord Fermanagh’s coach meeting them at Aylesbury.

They have been corresponding about a clock, which cost £80 when new. It is now to be had for £40.

“The mouldings on the Dial Plate may be easily repaired, a Painter at Buckm. askt 15 shillings last year to gild and paint a new Dial. Sir Wm. Stanhope had a Dial and Bell into the £70, but then it had no Minute Hand. The Clock here is quite worn out.” 25 Aug.  
1745.

“ . . . Deverell of Winslow has just made a Great Clock for Wooburn Town. . . . He offered a month agoe to make an exceedingly good Clock with a minute hand to it for Forty Guineas, but he was not to find a Bell. This Clock of Lady Essex’s must be very dear at £40, but if it really cost £80 or £60 it cant be much too dear at 40 pounds. Am at a Loss to judge whether tis best to buy a new One or take this. Gray the Watchmaker at St. James’ offered to make an extream good Clock for 42 or 43 pounds, I dont see what should make this come to so much unless some very eminent workman made it. Would it not be a good way to let a Workman view it, for a Crown perhaps, and give his Judgment as 29 Aug.  
1745.



to the worth of it, if it should be out of order or any Wheel damaged, it may cost 10 or 12 pounds to set it to rights. But if you are thoroughly convinced of the goodness of it, and think it better than a new one that can be made here, I should then be very willing to have it, and let the Repairs of it to be done here. . . . Mr. Herring is in waiting at the Bank next Monday and is obliged to leave us on Sunday, and Lady Fermanagh will then be very glad to see you, and little Miss, if she is still with you, at Claydon. The fine weather is just come and the Harvest almost quite ended, only Beans are in the Field. Pillsworths go to Stanford in a few days. . . . Mr. and Mrs. Herring's Compliments." ("The carriage and other expenses of getting the Clock from London would be £8.")

23 Aug.  
1745.

" . . . Sir Wm. Stanhope has new fronted his House with Portland Stone or freestone. He is laying a great deal of Money as badly as I ever see. He has only 2 good Rooms in the House, viz. the Dining Room and Gallery."

There was so little fear of another Stuart invasion that in the spring of the eventful year, 1745, officers who came down to recruit found no magistrates at Quarter Sessions ready to help them.

7 May  
1745.

*John Millward to Earl Verney*

"My Lord,—I recd. your Favour of the 4th. inst. The way of this Country among the Farmers is to hire their Servants, from Michels. to Michas. Wm. Stevenses Servants' Wagges will not be a year till Michas. next—and but very few people pay em their Wayges till the year is out so that there is half a year's wayges due to em at Lady Day last. . . . My Friends joyn in humble Duty to your Lordship & Countess, the Lady Betty and Lady Catherine. . . . There was no Qur. Session at Michas. & there has been complaint made of it to the King's Bench, and they have summoned Mr. Pigot up, who was the only justice that attended it. As I am told there was some officers who wanted a number of men to be rais'd in the County, & they was so angrey that there was no justices to do their Business, they writ up to the War Office from Aylesbury—& some other person that come a great way & could not have his Business done at the Sessions was so angry that he went from Aylesbury directly & complain'd to the King's Bench of it."

4 June  
1745.

*Sir T. Cave to Earl Verney*

[Purposing to visit their relations at Claydon, and wishing the Chelsea party might join them there.] "I am sorry no good account of the Affairs of Old England furnishes a Letter with one para-

graph, tho' I hope (& hopes cost nothing) Times will change again in her favour."

Sir James sends a haunch of venison, which Lord Verney notes weighed 18½ lbs.

*John Millward to Earl Verney*

30 Aug.  
1745.

"My Lord. . . Mr. Aubrey as now lives at Stoke . . . goes to live in Dorton great house which lies mighty convenient for his relation at Boarstall and Chilton. . . There is 43 ridges of Beans, I thought they would have been sold to my Lord's tenants of East Claydon and Bottle, but they lay so low as there was no dealing with em, at 10d. a Ridge, to be ready for the Cart, the Beans are large this yeare. My family joyn with mee in Humble Duty to your Lordship and Countess and Lady Betty Verney, Your Lordships most dutifull obedient and Faithful Servant,  
J. MILLWARD."

The father and son were still negotiating about a clock for the courtyard at Claydon, which seemed to them much more immediately important than the talk about invasion.

". . . Deverel told me twould be ten pound difference to have a minute hand to the Clock. There is as much difference in the work of Clocks as in anything whatever, and how Deverel would perform it I cant say, having no Judgment in such affairs, all I know is that there has been several lately made at Winslow and Buckingham. Have sent up 3 Hares and 3 Partridges in a Basket and a little Box of Fruit. There are 6 Peaches which are lowermost in the Box, as come out of East Claydon Garden which I think is a kinder Soil for that Species of Fruit. . . Tis a very unkind year for fruit, we have not a grape yet that has begun to change its colour. . . Mr. Price of Westbury plays Richard the 3rd. this Night."

5 Sept.  
1745.

The Government failed to form an Association; the Lord Lieutenant in Bucks takes no steps.

". . . The Assn. in Oxford to contribute unless those who enjoy Places will subscribe a year's salary. . . Am putting up the Great Clock, the Dial Plate is much too small, smaller than the old one. I fancy twill be right to have a new one to make it quite handsome. They have a mind for the old one at East Claydon Church—it will soon be eat up with Rust and fit for nothing at all. . . If you can make use of it then twould be best to keep it, they do not desire the Bill. Wife and Sister with their Duty and Love send up a little Pork and a few Sausages."

28 Nov.  
1745.

Fires were frequent in the villages as the autumn approached. They were to read the Bishop's recommendatory letter in aid of a Stratford fund, and Ralph refers to his father as to the amount "proper for us to give".

Meanwhile a much fiercer fire had broken out in the North, of which they were strangely ignorant.

The acute anxiety about the Protestant succession and the High and Low Church controversies seem to have died away in bucolic Bucks. The memories of the rebellion of '15 had a local interest, because when Ralph was a baby in arms our Dutch allies had marched over the Claydon fields, and thrifty housewives remember how not an egg was left at Winslow, nor a fowl or a duck as far as Stony Stratford for the Leicester markets.

But the sun and rain of some thirty summers had obliterated the weary Dutchmen's footprints, as other political interests held the field; so it was indeed a bolt from the blue when the tardy news reached Claydon of the far more serious rising of 1745.

To have been "Out in the '45"—what a heroic and tragic sound that had in the Highlands, where it might denote the forfeiture of an old title and the sequestration of an old estate—and how little it meant in the English Midlands, where men went on with their hedging and ditching, their reaping and thatching, unaware of the astonishing victories "Bonnie Prince Charlie" was winning in Scotland.

Another neighbouring family was in great trouble. Lord Fermanagh sends news that—

7 Nov.  
1747.

"... Mr. Piggot's only child and Son dyed last Friday, at Market Street School. He was seemingly a very fine youth, if they had not spoilt him by humouring him too much. He is to be buri'd at Grendon Church."

It was not till the Battle of Prestonpans had been fought in September that a copy of a letter from a friend in the North, written a few days after it, reached Claydon, forwarded by another friend, Mr. Fenwick, in Hatton Garden.

26 Sept.  
1745.

*George Westgarth to Mr. Fenwick*

"Our Mr. — will be glad to hear of his friends in the North these Perilous times; we were no doubt in a great fright after we heard of General Cope's defeat. The ingagement was last Saturday, 4



miles on this side Edenborough not above threescore miles from us. Our troops Lost, their first fire being given at too great a distance, & after the second, the Scots broke in upon them Sword in hand & cut down all before them. This raised a Panick in our Army which obliged them to retreat. Our Canon was never fired, but left in the Field which the Enemy carried off with many Armes, the Irish having quitted all & took to their heels. General Cope got safe into Berwick with about three Regiments; how many killed we have not yet heard but its thought not above two or three hundred, for the Battle lasted little more than a quarter of an hour, not half an hour in all, till most of our men thought Heels were better than Hands to trust to. This bad news put us all into such a consternation we expected nothing but to see the whole body of Scots in 2 or 3 days & to be plundered tho' we are told they are extreemly civil all the way they go—& only from particular Towns exact sums of money to be paid them quietly. Our County is all in Armes & appeared yesterday on Newcastle town moor; Sir Edward Blackett & Mr. A. headed in above fourscore all able fellows & completely armed, there was a prodigious show on the Town moor the whole drawn up on the Line of Battle & view'd by Sir Harry Lydall & Sir Wm. Middleton who is to command the whole. Our Ld. Lieut. left the County & went to London, having left us as soon as he heard these troubles were beginning, but we shall be very well taken care on by the above 2 gentlemen. We have 45 families of Roman Catholicks in this little town, so we keep a guard every night lest they should rise & do us mischief, tho' to give them their due they seem very quiet. Scarce a gentleman that was able to stir was left at his own house yesterday, but all appeared in the field. The enemy is about 7000 according to the best calculation spies can make. We do not hear they are advancing though tis thought they will attempt it, the young Gentleman being quite resolute.

Upon his sword on one side is a Crown and on the other a Coffin—that is—he must gain the Crown or die." [It was like the fortune of the Stuarts that he did neither.]

A more homely comment comes from Sarah Butterfield to Lady Catherine Verney:

"I fear your Ladyships will now be goen to London on this great bousell & Confushion I hear is in the world; our Lord Liffenant is to meet the freeholders and Clargy on Tuesday at Oxon to see how largely they will contribet to rais Men to defend their County and Neshon. I for my part am in no gret frit, what I am the most alarmd at is the Sheten oup of the Bank & the great Disafeckshon to the King in generall. I hope to have a nebor's fare in theis world, but I don't care how soun I am out on't for I have seen Revelushions a nouf . . . except my thanks to you and my Lade Farma-

13 Oct.  
1745.



nagh & my Lord, not forgeten the 2 Claydon parsens. I am myte sore to hear pour Mr. Markham has bin so ill of a fever."

Parson Markham was about to be given the East Claydon Living on the ground of his being a quiet man and "his character not litigious". An admirable character in the midst of "this great bousell & Confushion".

By December 4th, Charles Edward had reached Derby, and a panic had spread to Bucks.

8 Dec.  
1745.

*Lord Fermanagh to Earl Verney*

"... The Country was greatly alarm'd on Friday with the Rebels. They thought they had been coming here. Several Families removed & vast numbers pack'd up their Valuables and some sent them away. Ld. Cobham pack'd up his Arms & Plate & the best things & sent them away, but where I don't know. This frightened the people very much. They were carrying his things to Oxford but Mr. Greenville stopt em upon the Road and ordered them somewhere else. Ld. Cobham was in town but Mr. Dorrel sent to the House & immediately they began to pack up and dismissed the Workmen. Twas a simple affair & did hurt as it lower'd People's spirits. Lowndes pack'd up his Plate & his family were to have removed to Wotton yesterday as a more private place, but I hear Mr. Greenville was to set out for London not caring to stay. I believe they thought the Rebels were come to Northampton instead of the Duke."

The Duke of Cumberland, the strongest and fiercest of the King's sons, passed through Bucks on his way north; his soldiers were quartered in the Church at Newport Pagnell, and covered all the neighbouring fields. The Ouse was in flood, and a courageous Jacobite lady could boast that she had delayed the avenging army for an hour and a quarter by locking up Lathbury Bridge, which was on her property; but the transient glory of being "Out in the '45" was quenched in blood at Culloden, and it was not till Sir Walter Scott told the story of "Sixty Years Since" that the romance and glamour of Highland loyalty were realized in England.

As far as Claydon was concerned, the Jacobite chiefs had been executed, no real alarm had been felt in the South, and the routine of agricultural life went on as usual through that eventful autumn.

It had been said, when the Elector of Hanover left the safe obscurity of Herrenhausen on his accession, that the English nation was the most unstable and the English crown the most insecure in

Europe; but after the complete defeat of the last serious Stuart effort, "the little keen, fresh-coloured, old man, in his old-fashioned snuff-coloured clothes and brown stockings", as Thackeray has described George II. for us, never again had any serious cause for anxiety. Jacobite sentiment lingered on in the Highlands and in Wales, but Dr. Byron's witty toast could be drunk without serious consequences, the Government being judiciously a little deaf and blind:

God bless the King, God bless the Faith's Defender.  
God bless—no harm in blessing—the Pretender.  
*Which* the Pretender is, and *which* the King,  
God bless us all, is quite another thing.

## CHAPTER XXXI

### THE JOY OF GOING TO LAW, AN IRATE DUCHESS, AND A WOULD-BE JUDGE

AMONG the outer circle of the Verney's friends, none were as numerous as the physicians except the lawyers. The proceedings about the Eddystone Lighthouse had brought in many great legal names, but lawyers also abounded in the county. Mr. Merwin, the Winslow solicitor, was abused as "old and deaf and fumbling"; but when cases required local knowledge and experience it was always "old Merwin" that was in request.

Millward's account of the local Sessions showed great irregularity in the proceedings, and the opinions of the Justices, before and after their early dinner, varied considerably. Things changed when Charles Pilsworth became Chairman, and his neighbours considered it certain that he would be one of the next Judges. It was surprising how much the country squires enjoyed going to law—until the costs came in; the arguments on both sides furnished endless subjects for conversation.

Joseph Gridler, Sergeant-at-Law, of the Inner Temple, to Lord Fermanagh:

25 Oct.  
1733.

"... If your lordship orders payment of what Interest is due to us it will be very acceptable, for we are ready to be Devour'd by the mad Doctors for Mony. Dr. Monroe alone demanding for himself and assistants about £130 tho we think not a Qur. could be due or deserved—and the Estate we have discovered falls extremely short of our expectations. My Father's Estate bin the greatest part of it embezzled."

So even the much-abused lawyers felt themselves in need of protection.

There were disputes about boundaries and fixtures when, as in Squire Abel's case, he maliciously removed the lead round the

pump in the yard when he sold his house. There were quarrels about cattle that strayed, and ponds unduly drained away in order to remove the eels and the pike, and when the bills came in there was abundant abuse of their friends the lawyers. The great Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, set the example; she delighted in litigation, even about a few acres, which seemed to give a zest to her old age. She had survived her devoted husband for twenty-two years, and the longer she lived the more she went to law.

The Duchess had had some connection with Sir John Verney, 1st Lord Fermanagh (through the Rev. Wm. Vickers); and she dictates a vigorous letter to his son, with her own signature at the end in a shaky hand:

“My Lord,—I beg your lordship’s pardon for this Trouble, being so unlucky as to have a Law-Suit with a very impudent Fellow, Gardiner. Your lordship will remember that long since my Lady Cheshyre troubled you from me upon the same affair and then your lordship’s answers were very much to my Satisfaction. And indeed they could not be otherwise; because whatever had passed between you and Gardiner, when you designed to make a Purchase could have no Consequence as to me, since I, upon finding Gardiner was a Rogue employed another in the Business and paid him three hundred Guineas by Sir William Norwich’s own consent. And I have a Discharge from Mr. Peack, the man that received it, witnessed by Sir W. Norwich, to show that it was with his Knowledge and that I did not make use of his own Attorney to impose upon him. . . . He has been at Law a great while and has given me a great deal of trouble and there is to be a trial on Friday se’nnight at Guild Hall. This cause he begun in Chancery but finding that he could say nothing for it that had Truth and Commensense in it, he began a Cause for the same thing in the Exchequer. That is what the Law will not allow of, to have a Suit for the same thing in two Courts at once and therefore he was forced by the Chancery to make his election. . . . He excused his delaying this cause so long saying that as your Lordship was a Parliament Man he could not get it heard till Michalmaes Term, and yet yesterday surprised my Attorney in giving him notice that the trial was appointed for Friday se’nnight, and he brags extremeley that your Lordship is to be the chief Witness against me. But as I know this man to be the greatest Liar in the World, which I shall prove very strongly, I take the liberty to trouble your lordship and don’t doubt that you will have the Goodness and Justice to let me know what is the Truth of this matter. For of myself I cannot imagine what you can say against me in this cause, who never had the honour to see you. . . . I gave Sir W. Norwich £37,000 and three hundred

30 June  
1742.



guineas to his agent for the purchase, which was a great deal more than either Sir John Cheshyre or your Lordship had offered for it. . . . When I was first about the purchase not knowing Gardiner was their agent, I told him that if he could get the estate for £36,500 I would give him £400 for doing it. . . . When I found he was such a Knave as to pretend to be making a good bargain for me at the same time that he was an agent for Sir William, and was no doubt to be paid by him for imposing on me, I told him I would employ him no more and I bought the estate in the manner I have already told you.

I beg your Lordship's pardon for this long Trouble who am your lordship's most obedient, humble servant. S. MARLBOROUGH.

I beg your Lordship not to let Gardiner know the contents of this letter, because it is not reckoned right that the enemy should know the Strenth of one's Cause."

This letter was written within two years of the Duchess's death. She was then in her 83rd year.

The reason of the lawsuit seems to have been the unauthorized cutting of some trees, a frequent cause of dispute among country neighbours.

Small pilferings were only too common, and everyone looked to Lord Fermanagh to get them redress. Mr. Millward writes to him:

12 Nov.  
1738.

" . . . Last Sunday in Churchtime, Mr. White's house [at Steeple Claydon] was robbed some say of £60, it must be somebody that has known the house for they meddled with nothing till they came at the Box, where the money was, which they broke open. One of Miller's sons as had bin servant there they took up, he now lives at Quanton, he comes over on a Sunday and was at Church while the bells went, and when the Parson comes in he was observed to go out of Church and did not come in any more. . . . Southam from Bottle Claydon was accused but they could not get proof of the fact so was acquitted, though it looked ugly as he was seen in Mr. White's grounds after the bells had gone."

15 Nov.  
1738.

" . . . Young Southam was obliged to find two bondsmen for ten pounds for his appearance at Sessions, Mr. White can't make it out. Mr. Butterfield was like to have had a very bad accident a comeing from Mr. Abel's with his wife in their Chair, a comeing along towards Sand Hill, the weel went upon the ice which made a noise and frightned his mare, and she fell a kicking and broke both the staves and she kicked him over the brest but not very bad, they made shift to get out and got back again to Mr. Abel's. Joe Blooded him directly but he was not much hurt, Mr. Abel sent

Em both home in his Charret, Madame received no hurt but the fright."

Lord Fermanagh had inquired whether a tenant would take his horses, when the grass in the Park was finished. "Peter Hinton says they never take any horses in winter because they disturb the coves at Hay. . . ."

15 Nov.  
1738.

A frequent cause of offence was the robbery of the dovecots, a matter which was brought before Quarter Sessions, or, in serious cases, referred to the Assizes. Mr. Millward reports such a case to Lord Fermanagh at Chelsea with the political gossip that followed it at the Magistrates' dinner. The Winslow solicitor, "old Merwin", that vigorous evergreen, who had been considered too old for work for the last thirty or forty years, was employed in these cases; when Counsel's opinion was required, recourse was had to Charles Pilsworth, K.C.

*John Millward, at Claydon, to Lord Fermanagh, at Chelsea*

23 July  
1740.

"My Lord, . . . It was a great Assizes. Randell as killed the man on the Highway by Loudwater is condemned to die & be hang'd in chains near the place where he did the murder. There is a Horse Stealer convicted, but I believe will not be hang'd. There was one Cannon of Pitchcott, as had Robed, he & his companions, all the Dove Houses & Hen Rosts in the Neighbourhood. This Cannon on the 22nd. of last march, sold at the Crown in Aylesbury to a Carryer woman five dozen of old Pidgeons, & told her that he had a friend, as could help her to five dozen more. The woman told him she did not care to buy any more old ones, & she told him she wisht he comes honestly by these. He told her the reason of ther killing all these old Pidgons was his Mother rented of Squire Lowndes of Winslow a Dove House as lay between Whitchurch & Mursley; there was but a few when she come & she was to go away at Lady Day & she was very much menaced since she had been there, as she was resolved to leave no more than she found. All this the witness swore to the Grand Jury & the Tapster & the Hostler at the Crown.

Mrs. Hill's Dove House was broke open just before, & the Pidgeons stole, as Mrs. Hill's indited this Cannon for the theft. But as it could not be proved that they was her Pidgeons, nor as he broke the house he was acquitted tho' the Bill was found. Mr. Lowndes told the Jury as he had no Dove House nor Land between Whitchurch & Mursley, neither did this Cannon rent anything of him.

Mr. Piggott has had his Parke robed . . . & is very well assured it is these Rogues at Pitchcott.

Sir John Cheshire was Foreman of the Jury, Mr. Greenville dined with 'em & after Business was over, as most of it was before dinner, he told Sir John that he thought it very right for the Jury & all the Gentlemen as was there present, to follow the example of the City of London to sign a paper which he had already writ, which was to require the Concurrence of the 2 Representatives to promote a Place Bill next Session, to reduce the number of Place Men in the House of Commons. Sir John read it to the Company & they all approved of it & signed it, which is to be sent to Sir Wm. Stanhope and Sir Thos. Lee. Mr. Lowndes of Astwood has a Place, he was out of the room as he did not sign, I believe everyone did besides, it is wished that it may succeed. Mr. Greenville has his hands full, what with making Interest for his self for the County & for his brother James, the third brother for Aylesbury (who has lately married a Lady of £35,000)."

With so much salt meat in the winter, pigeons were an important article of fresh food. Each country house had its dovecot and the robbing of these was a continual source of annoyance. A certain Dr. Hughes writes to Lord Fermanagh about these and other nuisances:

14 Dec.  
1742.

"My Lord,—There having been a very great greivance in this Neighbourhood thro' the giddy misconduct of witless and unthinking Youth."

He describes two accidents, and maintains that irresponsible persons should be prevented by law from owning and using guns; he also thinks that gamekeepers disturb birds more than they protect them.

"For a frolick gentlemen see their Dove-houses and Yards continually attacked by such vile hands; the Church Wardens and Overseers on the upper part of every parish, might be empowered to restrain such injurious nuisances, the like power to be used to protect Fish, Warrens, Hares, etc."

Landlords and Parish Authorities were constantly appealing to Quarter Sessions for an order to remove labourers and their families lest they should get a "settlement" in a parish not their own. Mr. Millward writes:

13 Aug.  
1740,

"Ther is noe certainty in these Tryals, sometimes what is soe in the morning, is otherwayes in the afternoon, but it has bene more



regular of late since we have had a Council Chairman at Sessions.” He was conducting such a case, employing the Attorneys, Price and Merwin: “. . . I went down to the Session House to heare the Tryals about quarrels and assaults and such like, old Merwin was Employed in one of Em, and he made the saddest fumbling piece of work in pleading, I was quite sorry we had imployed him, we have made shift to get our point this time, and have got rid of a man, his wife and two children.”

17 Aug.  
1740.

“. . . Neighbour Bayley was upon the Jury, he was with me in the evening a treating the Attorneys and he payd his part towards the Bowle of Punch. . . . Old Nick Merwin is married and they say two Biters are Bit. The old man is got allmost superannuated and has but little business and has got low. This wife has some money as will help a little; he is very hard of hearing, tho’ he stood very tight to our Cause, which was one of his best performances.”

26 Aug.  
1740.

*John Millward to Lord Fermanagh*

There is some law business on the estate, and the Steward recommends that Mr. Pilsworth of Oving be consulted.

“. . . And if he is of oppinion that our Case is good I don’t fear but East Claydon will carry it, for he told Middle Claydon Officers that if he had been at the Sessions, & gone off the Bench while the Case was tried, as he was feed, he would have took Care that Justice was done. I believe things have been better carryed since there has been a Councill Chairman than used to be—For it has been often said—and I believe true, that things have been carried so, that as was Law in the Morning, they have acted contrary to in the afternoon. Eldridge of Wickham, used to be reckoned the Cleverest Man at the Sessions, for pleading those causes, but he has been dead a great while, now they tell me Geary is reckoned the best. . . . Mr. Abel never acts as Justice, if he did I believe he would have been on our side.”

2 July  
1740.

*Lord Fermanagh, at Claydon, to Earl Verney, at Chelsea*

“Honoured Sir, . . . The Parish Officer has been to take an opinion upon Hughes’s settlement. Mr. Millward went with the Parish Officer to Chilton to Mr. Justice Carter, who behaved with great civility to Em. The Justice told em that he could not act at the Sessions if he gave his Opinion in writing, as it was contrary to his Oath, but if they would sit down and show him their Case he would give his opinion in a friendly manner, which he said was entirely in favour of East Claydon. They told him by word of

15 Sept.  
1743.



mouth the whole case, he said Hughes belonged to Winslow. He would not take a Fee."

There is a dispute with Mr. Abel about the things he is carrying off from East Claydon.

15 Sept.  
1743.

"... My Carpenter last Sunday broke his Leg walking home from his place of worship, which is a great loss to me at this time. We expect Cousin Starkey's death dayly. Mrs. Hughes is Executrix and she has left her goods to her. Her money is disposed of thus:—to Rose, her late servant £12, to Hobbs and Wife, Hillesden £10, to Mr. & Mrs. Ingram and two daughters 20 shillings each, £10 to me and £20 to bear her funeral charges. . . . I hear Mr. Lowndes of Winslow talks very freely amongst his company of this family in relation to your Promotion; but they say t'is a Method with him to diminish if he can other people, in order to aggrandize himself."

18 Sept.  
1743.

Lord Fermanagh from Claydon writes to announce to his father the death at Steeple Claydon of their cousin, Mrs. Helena Starkey. She was a kind woman, and had often given hospitality to Elizabeth Verney and other members of the Claydon family. She had left several legacies written on tickets and stray bits of paper, and Lord Fermanagh wishes to know whether his father will claim the half-year's rent. Mrs. Starkey's friend, Mrs. Hughes, was in the house.

"Some people came to fetch their legacies away then but Mrs. Hughes was advised against letting em have anything out of the house till she had settled her accounts and proceeded in a regular manner. I wish you may get a tenant for the house, as tis a pretty place. Mrs. Starkey was buried at Steeple Claydon on September 22nd, 1743, aged 83."

Lord Fermanagh sends an account of a Ball at the Inn in East Claydon, but he is not quite sure whether Squire Abel patronized it. The disputes about fixtures are not yet settled, and Mr. Abel

"has let out a good deal of water from the Great Pond which supplied the house in order to get at the fish the better but he can't get all out, though he has made it so low that those who should look at the house might think there is a Scarcity of water."

25 Sept.  
1743.

"I have found out the whole secret of the leaden pump, which Mr. Abel took up about twelve years ago and had new cast, for which he has the modesty to claim it as his own; I am told he has sold it. I should think he might as well have cast all the Led about the house, if new casting it woud give him a Title to it. I believe

too, he has taken away the Desk in the Study and likewise the Kitchen Grate, which was fixed to the Freehold. I bought none of his things, the marble was stain'd and he would not lower his Price.

I bought a house in East Claydon this week of Tho. Holding of Wendover. He was a single L'k [Limerick] at the Election I could get no confession from him nor any reason why he voted so, for he said he neither had or was to have any money for his Vote. I gave him 17 pound for the House which stands at the corner of Long Lane as you go to Winslow and is the next house beyond the Swan Inn, from Sand Hill. . . . Dr. Knapp and Mr. Green dined here on Monday. Mr. Knapp has received a threatning letter which they thought woud bring him for Hertfordshire a week sooner than he intended. . . . The Post is grown very insolent and takes it into his Head not to call here but when he pleases; and on Thursday last our letters did not go. He said it was out of his way to call from Bicester to Winslow and he could not.

T'woud be proper for to write to the Post Master General with complaints of the Winslow Post, either to remove him or at least threaten him if he does it any more, unless you thought it better to call at the Post Office and speak about it, for unless some case is taken we shall loose the benefit of the Post. . . . Morris is the Post-master's name at Winslow but he letts the Post to Windmill who behaves so ill. Mr. Millward had a letter which he would not leave because Mr. M. was not within and carried it away and did not bring it till the next day."

There is a pathetic petition to Lord Fermanagh from the prisoners confined for debt in Ireland, in which they hope he, as an Irish Peer, will present their case to Parliament.

"The most humble Petition of the poor Debtors in close confinement in all the Severall Gaols in the Kingdom of Ireland.— 1742.

Most Submissively Complaining—

That by Misfortunes we became involved in Debts and Securitys and not Able to pay our Cruell Creditors who imprisoned us, and seized all our Effects that same day and Languishing and deprived of Air and cannot follow our Industry—

We by Restraint are more Subject to Infection than others, and in sickness are forced to remain so be it ever so Malignant, no place being allotted for the Sick, but Sick and Well together are the greatest objects of Compassion that ever besought the Relief of the Legislature—

We beg pardon but our very low State of Life is so miserable it compells us to apply to you and your interest in motioning to bring a bill in our behalf into Parliament now assembled, and that you

will take our most Lamentable Case and Condition into consideration and have Pitty and be most graciously pleased to pass an Act for our Enlargements or an Allowance from our Creditors as tis in great Brittain and is not in this Kingdom.

And we with our Ruined families shall ever pray for you and yours."

17 July  
1744.

*Lord Fermanagh to Earl Verney*

"Hond. Sir, . . . I was at Buckingham last Tuesday, where I dined with Ld. Chief Justice Lee. I did not serve upon the Jury nor was not called over upon the List. Sir Charles Tyrell was Foreman, Mr. Greenville, Denton, Lowndes, Urthwait, Purefoy, etc. were upon the Jury. Mr. Price & Bollard were there as were the 2 Mr. Lees & Mr. Ingoldsby. I hear the Gentlemen staid till Friday, tho' there was little or no Business except Drinking. There was only one Prisoner & he was acquitted. . . . My Team in going to Bedford heard a great outcry at Rigemone, the Lady who rents that house was to have received £500 that day at Ampthill, two Villains heard of it and attacked the House. The Lady was coming by my Waggon about 12 or 1 o'clock at night, & hearing the noise returned into the Town to raise the People. The Rogues pass'd by the Waggon twice & got nothing, the Lady not having receiv'd it. The Rogues had a Dog kill'd by the People, they made their escape."

28 July  
1745.

". . . I dined last Tuesday with Judge Wright & Reynolds. Footman & Jerome, two noted Highwaymen, are to be tryed at Cambridge. Hill, who stole Matthews' Horse was condemned and reprieved for transportation. Matthews came here to attend at Buckingham in case the Fellow would have discovered where he had concealed the Horse, but he would make no Confession. There was only one triffling Cause, which made it very bad for the Lawyers & I believe as little Business for them all through the Circuit as ever was known. . . ."

7 Aug.  
1745.

"Hond. Sir, . . . Last Thursday Handy an Alehousekeeper of Singleborough pull'd up a new dead Hedge at East Claydon Field upon which the Men, whom I employ went to him & he was very abusive to them. So had a Warrant from Sir Charles Tyrrell, who was very obliging & said he would endeavour to suppress him for the future, & would either have him pay the Damage or be whipt, when the Warrant was served the Constable carrying the Fellow to Lowndes, they being afraid of Sir Charles Tyrrell, Lowndes told em the Hedges were put up without an Act of Parliament & that Justices ought not to grant Warrants for such frivolous things, & that nothing but an Action could be brought against Him, & Justices had nothing to do with such unwarrantable Proceedings, &



therefore he discharged him. L——s has not been here since I was in the Country. Winslow Law is always against Claydon, and I wonder L——s is not ashamed to fly so often in the Face of Justice, for he always looses his point at the end. Unless the Fellow is very contrite & makes humble submission, I must bring an Action against him at the next Assize, otherwise all my Fences will be thrown down, for L——s has given all the Encouragement possible to set people at Work."

*Lord Fermanagh to Earl Verney*

There is money owing from a farmer, Isaad Green; there is also a dispute with Miller of Syersham.

"... Hay Harvest is very late this year, the Crops being very thin, I belive they will not cut the grass this fortnight. . . . Doctor Knapp lives at Stony Stratford, should I go to him & desire him to speak to Mr. S. He is a talkative man, loves his Bottle, & perhaps may do it better than any body else; or would an Attorney do it better. Mr. Lamb of Buckingham is reckon'd a very clever Man, & perhaps might do it very well, or young Yates who is come to Winslow. I doubt Merwin is too deaf and old for it, that Selby would make a Joke of him. I know of none hereabouts besides, unless it be done by a Land Broker in Town. . . . Dormer lies dangerously ill & tis thought can't get over it. His Tenants have put but 6 score Sheep upon the Hills, & now wish they had put none there, for there is no keeping for them."

17 June  
1746.

Lord Fermanagh writes again:

"Some of Lord Fortescue's land is to be sold. Brown Willis told me old Selby cheated his Father out of his share, which I think he gave £1,500 for, but was vastly cheap. Would it not be proper for you to keep a Court now at Adstock, as Merwin is old & perhaps may not last long. As he has done it before, he knows perhaps better how to do it than a Stranger wou'd, having his former copies by him. Your most dutiful son.

FERMANAGH."

22 June  
1746.

A tenant, Rogers, speaks about his rent. Lord Fermanagh tells him he had better call on his father at Chelsea "when he went with his Oxen to Smithfield".

"... Dormer designs to stock the Hills [at Quainton] at Lady Day. He fish't the Great Pond last week and let out most of the Water, most of the Fish except 10 brace of Carp dyed. He sent me a Brace about 19 inches long and weighed 7 pounds and a half. They were dead and eat muddy. He emptied the Pond at a wrong time of year. . . . I must turn 890 sheep into the Hills and if Dormer putts any Horses or Cows into it must pound them. 800 Sheep will eat it



as bare as the Highway. He loves the Law, and never so happy as when engag'd in it. The parson is suing him for Tithes, I fancy it has cost him £200 already. I wish I am not forc't into Lawsuit with him at long run. He is so strange a man that there is no likelihood of dealing with him, he takes the Sheep Commons into his own hands, so I shall endeavour to stock the Hills in such a manner that he may loose his whole rent and the expence of Sherperding besides."

Whence it appears that Squire Dormer had no monopoly of unneighbourliness.

Lord Fermanagh informs his father that a letter has been received from Joseph Aris, Mr. Denton's gamekeeper, to prohibit Johnson the Miller at Bourton from fishing, where he has always fished.

9 Dec.  
1746.

"... The Manor belongs to me, and I have ordered him to fish on, for I don't understand any right Mr. Denton has in Bourton unless he has taken possession of the Manor by his frequent hunting there."

Lawsuits are at the moment so scarce that the smallest fish seems able to start one.

21 July  
1745.

*Lord Fermanagh to Earl Verney*

"Hond. Sir, . . . Things are so very uncertain & precarious at present that tis almost impossible to form any Judgement & consequently to give any Opinion whether to sell Stock or not. The Election of the Emperour will give a great Turn to Affairs & if the Grand Duke should be chose perhaps the Stocks might rise a little Higher, but every Trading Company especially the Indian Company, run very great Hazards in War Time, & the Loss of one fleet of Ships would make Stock fall greatly lower. But I hope this will be no obstruction to your Visit here. . . . Captain Chaloner dislocated his Knee Pan by a fall from his horse, the Surgeons at Berkhamstead did not give him any relief so he came to Winslow last Thursday & Turland gave him Ease immediately. I believe he return'd home that day. Mr. Hartley came here . . . he had been at Cambridge to take a Master's Degree. . . . Mr. Chilcott has likewise took his Doctor's Degree."

28 July  
1745.

"Mr. Pilsworth has been laid up with the Gout . . . but is better and came to Buckingham, but could not dine with the Council. He proposed going the Circuit."

Charles Pilsworth was the most considerable lawyer in the neighbourhood of Claydon. He had a great reputation among the





Elizabeth [Cave] Pilsworth.



Justices of the Peace for his clear head and fair mind, a verdict in which he himself fully concurred.

He had become a kinsman of the Verneys by his second marriage with Elizabeth Cave, the eldest daughter of Sir Thomas Cave, 3rd Bart., and Margaret Verney. He had rebuilt with consummate taste his home at Oving, which has happily escaped any Victorian restoration. Oving House stands on a ridge overlooking a wide view of the Vale of Aylesbury. The proportions of the house and the restrained beauty of its interior decorations make it a delightful specimen of the best taste of the period. Lord Fermanagh frequently mentions the Pilsworth family in his letters from Claydon to his father, and in September 1743 there is a house-warming at Oving. “. . . Mr. Pilsworth goes into his New House this week and makes a Ball the first night, and I hear Mrs. Pigget invites the Company.”

25 Sept.  
1743.

But the possession of a good wife and a charming house, a seat in Parliament for Aylesbury, and the honourable position in the county of Chairman of Quarter Sessions, were not sufficient to satisfy the ambition of Charles Pilsworth. He considered his own claims to being a judge were quite irresistible. He was on the Cambridge circuit when he received the news of a suitable vacancy. He wrote most peremptorily to his kinsman, Earl Verney, to join him at once in an appeal to the Prime Minister:

*Charles Pilsworth, Esqre., to Earl Verney, from Cambridge*

18 Mar.  
1745.

“My Lord,—I wrote to you yesterday from Huntington; but the post coming in afterwards from London brot an Accot. of J. Chappelles Death. As there are now two Vacancys, this will be the fairest opportunity that can offer of pushing our point; for if the Ministry will not comply now, I shall be convinc’d they never intend to do anything. If by what your Lordship observes from their Conduct upon this occasion they shd appear to trifle with us, we must in such Case find access to the King forthwith. I shall be oblig’d to your Lordship if you will take the trouble of calling upon the Bishop of Worcester, at his House in Spring Garden, by Charing Cross, or at the House of Lords. If there shd be any Difficulty I daresay he will assist us in our Address to the King, if that shd become necessary, ffor I am determin’d to press this point at this Juncture; if those seats are fill’d with younger lives I can have no further expectations & shall think no more of it. I shall impatiently expect a line from your Lordship—after you have seen some of the Ministry—Directed for me upon the Norfolk



Circuit. If you see the Bishop of Worcester you'l favour me with my Complimts to him. The same attend your good ffamily from Your Lordps. obliged & hum. Servt., CHAS. PILSWORTH."

21 Mar.  
1745.

*Earl Verney to Charles Pilsworth*

"... The morning after I heard of Baron Castor's death I went to Mr. Pelham's, but Missing of him I wrote to him for fear any one should be before me. I have had some discourse with him since; he speaks very fair & wishes you may be a Judge, but says it can't be now tho'; he own'd twas not absolutely fixed but he says those things won't always go as he would have em. I verily believe he will serve you the next vacancy, but Chub's being fix'd for one. I fancy the other who is not yet known may be recommended by a particular set of people, but that is only my guess. I spoke with Mr. Winnington who is much your friend & wishes you had it, but he says the Chancellor & the King settled it by themselves this time, therefore he says you must have patience & it will be. Upon the whole it appears plain to me that no further progress can be made at this juncture & going to the Bishop would be useless; but I really believe the Ministry are in earnest & will serve you another time. If you don't concur in my Opinion, then I hope you will come to London the moment the Assizes end, for nothing more can be done till you do. This family desire their Complemts, & I am, Dr. Sir, Yr. affecate. Relative & obedient Servt., V."

4 Aug.  
1745.

Lord Fermanagh reports a visit paid to Oving House that summer. "... We went to visit Mrs. Pilsworth and left my letter for the Post, but by mistake they omitted giving it him." He gives an unfavourable account of the men about the place—"very drunken fellows"—probably in consequence of the Master's frequent absences.

4 Apr.  
1745.

*Charles Pilsworth, K.C., to Earl Verney*

"My Lord,—I recd. a Letter yesterday by which I am pretty well assured that Nothing is yet absolutely settled. Chute has been refused by the Chanr., Noel refuses the Judgship & Skinner refuses to give up the other to Noel. That Scheme being disconcerted, the ffavours are now intended for two p'sons little thought of, Sergt. Fforster & Clive. My ffriend writes me word that as my pretensions are prior as well as superior to them, & nothing absolutely fix't, my coming to Town to make another strong effort will be necessary. I can't but say I like the appearance of things better, from the nomination of the above mention'd p'sons, than before. I have therefore determin'd to be in Town, by Sunday Dinner, and shall

be extremely glad to find a line in Chancery Lane from your Lordship, that you will favour me with a meeting at Mrs. Churchill's in Pall Mall on Monday morning, eight o'clock, in order to go with me from thence to Pelham's. This will be a great addition to former favours which have greatly oblig'd, my Lord, your most obedt. Servt.,

CHAS. PILSWORTH.

My wife joins in duty and service as due."

Of the "two persons little thought of"—Clive's young relative in India was to make the name famous in every English home, and Forster was such a model Judge as to find a place in Churchill's *Rosciad*—

Each Judge was true and steady to his trust  
As Mansfield wise, and as old Foster just.

Mr. Pilsworth received the usual polite postponement, which was all that a harassed Minister had to bestow, and before the next vacancy occurred on the Bench he had himself passed into the court of a Higher Judge.

His widow, Mistress Elizabeth Pilsworth, retained the house at Oving and lived in it till her death, since when it has had many different owners. There is a charming little relief in plaster which may well be her portrait. It must have been a happiness to her to be within reach of her cousins at Claydon. Her sister, Penelope, also married a lawyer in good circumstances, a Mr. Thompson. She and her mother, Lady Cave, who lived to a good old age, were probably often guests at Oving House.

*Lord Fermanagh to Earl Verney*

29 June  
1746.

"... On Friday I rid round your Chace. Mr. Selby Lowndes, Markham and some more were hunting a fat Buck that day, but I did not see them. I think the Underwood is far from being bad, the side that lies next Little Horwood and Winslow seems to have a good deal of Timber. Wherever Mr. Selby has cut the underwood he seems to have cleared the Timber, but there are many Samplers left, which in a term of years would be fine Trees. . . . Old Ways and Means bid £17,000 when Selby bought it, who gave £20,000 for it including the estate at Wavenden, Whaddon, etc. Lowndes would have had it then, but could not raise the Money time enough, as I am told . . . at Bowden Green Fair near Northampton, as two men were leading two horses out of a stable, a flash of Lightning kill'd both the men and horses upon the spot. Place House in Wooburn Parish, which belongs to Perry Bertie, is to be

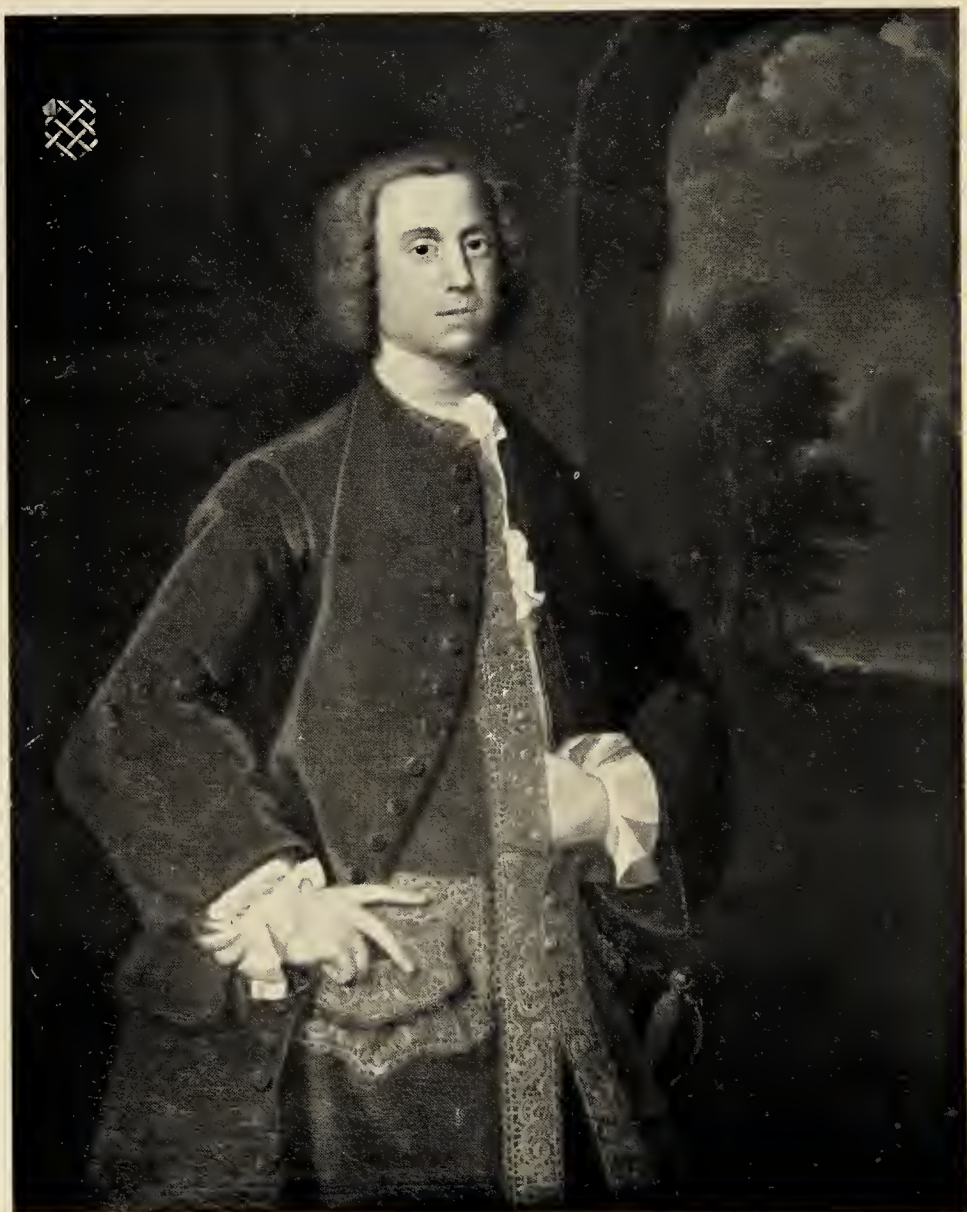
sold before a Master in Chancery to be pulled down. . . . Old Merwin says he never kept a Court at Adstock."

3 July  
1746.

" . . . Bewley of Tring and Lawley, two Attorneys, are settling Lownes' Court Rolls; tis currently talked here that Dick Greenville is to go into the House of Lords before the rising of the Parliament. Mr. Pilsworth is expected at Oving today. I give you joy of your new purchase. I think I heard Hamey Palmer say sometime ago, Cards could have sold their house but could not make a title. Perhaps, when this affair has taken place, it will be more convenient for you to be at Claydon, as you may like to be there when Palmers quit."







Sir Verney Cave, 4th Baronet.

## CHAPTER XXXII

### THE FOUR RUGBY SCHOOLBOYS

THE elder of the four, Sir Verney Cave, is one's ideal of an eighteenth-century beau, with his slight figure, his beautiful clothes, and his exquisite voice and manners. His early death must have been a sorrow to many beyond his family circle.

By the end of 1729, his mother writes that

"Tommy is settled at Oxford and of Balliol College, a Gentleman 8 Dec.  
Commoner, which I think you most approve of, as did his Brother's 1729.  
Master and several others, so he will be pretty much prejudiced to any other, and thought he should do worse if a Commoner, and tho' the expense is more and the restraints something less, I comply'd rather than discourage him, and I hope he'll behave so that I shall not repent of that indulgence. He likes his Reception and Settlement extremely; he wrote me word by our Parson, who went with him and stayed a week there to wont him and see him settled in his Chambers etc."

Tommy Cave, who needed neither a title nor a fine coat to enhance his pleasant proportions and ready wit, continues to figure in our letters.

Margaret, the Dowager Lady Cave, was on a visit to her son when she wrote to Lord Fermanagh:

". . . Our happiness here was greatly eclipsed last Sunday sen- 15 Sept.  
night by Lady Cave's having a sinking fit at Church, and with 1736.  
difficulty got out of Church, and no Drops nor anything near, wick made it worse and longer. A very little bloud was taken away in the afternoon, and a little time after it she had another fit.

We had Dr. Farrer to her, who seldom prescribes a great deal, and by his order she has been for the first time in the Cold Bath and seems to bear it very well . . . we intend to leave the happy Pair here, to themselves, and shall travel together or as near as we can contrive it."

The Lady Cave who fainted in church was Sir Thomas' bride, and his mother was for the second time leaving Stanford to settle in London.

All four boys were grandsons of Claydon, and as much at home there as at Stanford.

Mary Lovett was naturally anxious that her two should, as early as possible, earn their own living, though the sale of the lighthouse had given her a fortune to leave to the eldest.

The widowed sisters are such a comfort to each other that they live together as much as their children's interests permit, and it is from Stanford that Mary writes to her brother in London. She appeals first for her sailor-boy, as his profession will claim him the youngest.

6 May  
1721.

"Deare Brother,—My designs were to have been this week in town, but as it is God's Will to prevent me, by the affliction of a sick Child here, I must intreat your interest for poor Jack, towards getting him the King's Letter. I writ to the Captain as soon as ever I heard he had a ship, and Ill enclose his answer that you may see what he advises me to doe. The ship is not goeing out immediately, but he would have me in A readyness, for when it comes twill be all of A sudden and too late perhaps to set about it then; and there is so many these bad times putting in for the Letter, that unless it be asked by somebody of quality it is hard to gett. A word from you to any of the Lords of the Admiralty or leading men of the State will secure a promise for me for that ship whenever it goes out. Be pleased to tell them he has the honour of being your nephew, which will be of service to him, and I should think that if you told them how much we have drowned in the midst of the sea it might be a means to have them prefer A Child whose Father has spent all his substance and life too in their Service. If Mr. Stone will be in town I believe he is related to Sir John Jenings, and his Interest with him might easily procure a promise. Sir John is Cousen Germane to Captain Vanbrugh, and would be a mighty proper person to apply to on his account. They all say the ship is not going out but I must get a promise that Jack may be put down for a volunteer in it whenever it does go. If any money to be necessary to be layd down at the Admiralty Office for entering him in that ship or any other gratuity, I beg youl give me Creditt and doe whats fitting to be done and indeed Ile be thankfully honest. I verily believe the Captain thinks he shall go somewhere and I would not for the world have poor Jack miss going with it for I know he'll be a Father to him which will be a mighty satisfaction. I beg pardon, Deare Brother, for offering



you this trouble, but I have no friend elce that its likely to succeed by, for without a Title its in vain to ask anything, and with that everybody tells me this favour may surely be obtained, and I shall be highly joyed when it is; now for our poor sick family. I hope the worst is past; master Tommy [Cave] is this day got upon his leggs again and very glad to find them, poor child; he has bin at death's door and is mightily fallen away; my poor child [Verney Lovett] is in his bed and alive, which is wonderfull; for three days we all thought he was dying, my sister sett up with him a Thursday night to see his last, and several more, but he tugged hard and I hope has got the better for this time. For though he is extreem week and worn to nothing, the Doctor says he is but patcht up for his Lungs are Certainly Decaying and he fears he is in a Consumption. He must goe into a Milk Diet and Drink Asses Milk if I can get it, and be blooded every month this six months; as for the Milk Diet I am sure he'll never goe into it, so he must have but a short life the Doctor says, for if this ever comes upon him again he is gone. He has spitt a deal of blood and has been three times blooded this week, and the Doctor fetcht in the night to him; and after all this we have the comfort to see them both alive, which has raised our spirits mightily. The Doctor has ordered my Sister several things for herself, and to be blooded every fortnight for six weeks or two months. I believe she would have been better if these frights and Fatigues had not happened; and indeed she was so kind to me to take share of the setting up, and all my trouble with Verney, which indeed has been very terrible; but God be praised we are all alive, and I hope now everyone will grow better every day. I am very sorry for poor Mr. Herbert, and also his Lady, for I believe they were a happy couple and such a parting will be very sad. Sir Verney came home A Thursday to see the sick; they all joyn in duty to you and all at Claydon, with the true affection of Lady Cave and dear Brother, yours,

M. LOVETT."

The doctors' fears for Verney Lovett were happily exaggerated, and after his severe illness at Stanford he returned to the care of his half-brother at Dublin.

Mary Lovett was anxious that her Jack should get accustomed to the sea before there is a vacancy for him in the Royal Navy. She writes to her brother:

"... I hear the 'Leopard' is like to go to Africa, which I have <sup>9 July</sup> been told is a very good voyage, but I believe it is a very long one. <sup>1722.</sup> I hope God will bless my poor boy and preserve him to be a happy and good man."

"... I must return you my humble thanks for your favour to <sup>1724.</sup> my son John, who sent me word you were soe kind to goe with



him to Captain Medley, which was extreem kind and might have been a great piece of service to the Child, and the satisfaction to me in hearing what he said if it had been my good fortune that you had met him; but as I must expect noe share of that yet I will be very thankful. I am glad to hear the Ship got out safe and I pray that poor Jack may return so in her. I should take it for a favour if your newspapers give any account of the letters that you would communicate it, for as I see none I can have no expectation but from those that do."

It does not seem sufficient for a naval officer to do well, he is constantly in need of an influential friend if he is to get his chance of active service. His mother writes again to her brother, from Stanford, in the beginning of 1726:

21 Jan.  
1726.

"Dear Brother,—I am truly thankfull for your soe kindly thinking of my Son, who I hope has been with you and acquainted you how his matters stand, and that he has passed his examination. I own my thoughts and wishes are at present taken up for him, therefore if I am impertinent I hope you'll forgive me; and now he's qualified I can't but ask your favour toward getting him A Commission, which will be something sure let War or Peace. Now all the world is in Motion I hope it may be got for him with the greater ease . . . I know he is with a very good Captain, and I believe he was well esteemed by Sir John Jennings in their Voyage, but we have a notion here that he is not now in very good favour at Court, and if soe perhaps the Captain may decline with him, and only be kept in a Guard Ship upon the coast, which would be greatly to Jack's disadvantage. . . . I writt to him to consult with his Captain and ask his advice, who indeed I believe is his friend, and I have writt to the captain myself, but letters are soe long in comeing and goeing from us that there is noe waiting for them where time is not to be lost, which makes me repeat the favour of you who are near at hand, to assist him where and when you think it needfull."

Other distressed naval men demand his help, which generally seems to have been effectual.

14 Feb.  
1727.

Mrs. Mary Wilson writes in great trouble from Dublin to Lord Fermanagh to ask him to speak to any Lord of the Admiralty on behalf of her husband for "half pay", as being "lieut. of several man-of-war since no man behaved in that post with more honour". She is writing unknown to her husband till she hears whether her application has any success. Mrs. Wilson is a cousin of Mrs. Stone's.

*William Kelly, from Portsea, to Lord Fermanagh*

11 Feb.  
1732.

“My Lord,—Your lordship about 9 years since was pleased to do me the favour of writing to Commdr. Townsend then Commdr. of Her Majesties Dockyard, Portsmouth to enter my son William in the Yard, which was done. . . . I hope length of time has not occasioned your lordship to forget me. My Father’s name was John Kelley and kept the Swan in East Claydon. My lord I am and have been for twenty-nine years past a Shipwright in the aforesaid yard, during which all time I have behaved myself well and that none of the Officers can alledge anything against me, and having brought up a Large Family and now having a wife and two children living with me—and there being a rumour of a discharge here, I humbly solicit your lordship to use your Interest with the Commrs. of the Navy or with Richard Hughes, Esq., Commdr. of the said Yard that I may not be discharged but be continued in the same station I am now in.”

The Lovett sailor turns up in London in October 1733, “just 9 Oct. come home from his sea-voyage”, to the great joy of his mother 1733. and Besse.

After this, promotion seems to have come in due course, with the coveted distinction of the command of a ship in the Mediterranean Fleet on active service.

As a Lieutenant, he was at the taking of Porto Bello under Admiral Vernon in 1739.

Meanwhile, Verney Lovett, aged eighteen, was entered as a Pensioner at Trinity College, Dublin. His half-brother, Bob Lovett, who, years before, had stayed at Claydon on his way to and from Eton, was keeping an eye on him, and was satisfied with his behaviour.

Mary writes from Stanford to her brother:

“A letter from Bob Lovett gave me great comfort for he says 4 Nov. Verney he verily believes will be a great Credit and Comfort to me, 1723. for he goes on very well, and seems to carry sober inclinations and a modest behaviour. The other letter you enclosed me was from Verney, which tells me he is very well pleased with his situation and A Coledge life, and that he will endeavour to answer all my care and good wishes for him, he says he has many friends, that are Extreem kind to him, so that nothing can make him more happy, but the seeing me. I hear he has got an Ague, but I don’t say a word of that; I have purchased him Chambers in the Coledge and he says they are mightily to his liking.”

This happy state of things came rapidly to an end. The lad got into an unexplained scrape at College, which his harassed mother was inclined to view with severity, as she was told that his return to College was impossible, and he refused to accept the only opening she could provide for him, by entering the 39th Regiment, just about to sail for India.

Aug.  
1724.

“Dear Brother,—I am greatly obliged to you and my good Uncle for thinking of my Miserable Misfortunes, and the most likely ways to extricate me. . . . I wish to God he ware safe with A good East India Captain, it being what I liked best for him, but if he be not willing to go I shall be glad to know how far you think I may proceed by way of force, and what else is to be done, for you will find by the enclosed there is no hopes of his Study. . . . I will do all in my power, and all that you and my Uncle thinks I may doe towards bringing him to an India Voyage, and if that dont succeed I don’t know what will become of him. I have writt to Bob and told him I intreated with the Captain about him, and bid him prepare his mind to goe, for its what he must do.”

Oct.  
1724.

“Dear Brother,—I return you many thanks for your last kind letter, and I have since communicated my positive resolutions to God, that I will not hazard the buying Verney any Post in the Army either with my money or credit, if he would not go to the Indias, there was nothing more that I can do for him. There is little reason to expect he’ll consent to goe, or if he did, that any advantage would accrew to him by it, from the resolutions he takes along with him, so what in this world to doe I know not. I hope you and my Uncle will give me your tender thoughts upon it. My Uncle mentions his returning to the Colledge again, but that I believe cannot be (I wish it could), for his disgrace is too publick to enter in there again, and he has forfeited his friends there, soe he is altogether unqualified for that place. I wish I coud hit upon the thing he’s qualified for, or rather pray to God to qualifie him for anything that’s good, I think he has not wanted my instructions towards it. . . .”

His mother had her way. It is evident that the college-scrape—whatever it was—was not serious enough to bar his way to a Commission in a good regiment.

He seems to have taken kindly to his profession as a soldier, and he is keenly anxious to be advanced to the rank of captain, when he is serving as a lieutenant in Ireland in 1742 and 1743.

The 39th Regiment did not sail as early as the Lovetts expected. It embarked for India in 1754, and returned in 1758, with a



glorious record, having taken part in the battles of Plassey, Nellore, Trichinopoly, Wandiwash, and various others.

*Lieut. Verney Lovett to Lord Fermanagh*

Limerick,  
30 Apr.  
1742.

"This most gratefully acknowledges the favour of your lordships of the 20th instant and to acquaint you that on the receipt of Mr. Dewdale's Letter I apply'd to Lt. Hepburne to declare upon honour, whether he ever apply'd to Coll. Campbell to oppose my buying Cap. McNoes Compy. with a Design of being the purchaser himself. He very publicly before the Whole Corps declared, and has since given it under his hand to Coll. Whitshed that he had a fair offer made of it, that he refused it, and gave it most chearfully up to me, that whatever Coll. Campbell by memorial has laid before His Majesty or His Grace of Devonshire was without his knowledge or desire; he carrys it still farther, that if the Coll. would advance the £900 he must go under such stoppages for seven years that he would not accept of it on those terms for he declares he had rather live and dye a Lt. than lie under such a burthen for seven years.

I have wrote to Coll. Whitshed and our Agent setting forth the hardships I have lain under by Coll. Campbell's unexpected memorials upon Lt. Hepburns letter to Coll. Whitshed; desiring them to sett the matter in a right Light to my lord Duncannon whether I succeed or not, I should be glad His Grace of Devonshire was acquainted with Coll. Campbell's Officiousness (so I think I may style it) and if you think proper I should be glad my Lord Duncannon saw this. Upon the whole I hope still as recommended by you, the purchase will turn out in my favour. I beg my Duty may be made acceptable to my Lady and my uncle Palmer, my sincere respects to the Young Ladies and Gentlemen. I am with the greatest respect your most dutiful and obedient nephew, VERNEY LOVETT."

The following summer he writes to his uncle still from Ireland, but with better hopes.

"My Lord,—I was favour'd with yours of the 17th ultmo. and return you my most hearty thanks for your Lordship's early congratulations. Sir Robt. Willmott's Letters of late have greatly raised my spirit, in assuring me that His Majesty has consented to Capt. McNoes retiring and that the Commissions are actually sent over to Holland; when I think of the variety of pleasures that will there amuse His Majesty I have the palpitation of the heart, on the other side I am convinced Sir Robt. would never have stil'd me Capt. had he not had very sure grounds for it, so betwixt hope and fear my Fate's depending.

Dublin,  
1 June  
1743.

We shall march from this about the 20 Inst., so should be proud



to receive your lordship's Commands about the pattent, whether I should leave it with Mr. Belcher or take it with me. An opportunity of sending it over will be much sooner from hence than from any Quarter in Ireland; I am not certain but I believe I shall go to Killkenny.

Tho' your lordship hints so much to the contrary, I cannot but acknowledge the favour of your recommendations and countenance in my late affair I shall ever believe the success is owing to that and that only.

I beg of my duty to my lady and compliments to all my kind enquirers and I am with the greatest respect your lordship's Most Dutyfull and Obedient Nephew,  
VERNEY LOVETT."

This letter was only received at Chelsea on the 7th of June.

11 July  
1743.

*Mary Lovett to Lord Fermanagh*

"Dear Brother,—By a letter last night from Verney, I received the unwelcome news of their Regiment being immediately ordered to Flanders, and he was then in A great Hurry Disembarking their men from on Ship board, he does not say whether we are likely to see him or not, but that we shall hear from him soon; this is a great surprise upon us, and indeed I believe upon them, the prospect is bad, but through an All wise Providence, we must have hope. Your favours to him obliges me to give you this trouble least in such A Hurry, he should omit it himself, he desired I would not write to him till I heard again, for he said they should be on the March. Our Compliments wait on my sister and Lady Betty, the same to your Lordsp. from, Dear Brother, your very affectionate Sister & Humble Servt.  
M. LOVETT."

Docketed "Her Son going to Flanders".

We return to Mary Lovett's sailor-son.

In reply to inquiries at the Admiralty, the following particulars have been sent us of Captain John Lovett's later career.

"John Lovett was appointed Captain of the *Neptune*, a second rate of 90 guns, under Commodore Lestock, on November 16, 1741. He sailed immediately afterwards for the Mediterranean, where he retained the same station for some time; and is erroneously stated in some few accounts, to have acted as Mr. Lestock's captain in the well-known encounter with the French and Spanish fleets. But this is a very manifest mistake, he having, on that occasion, commanded the *Kingston* of 60 guns, the rear-ship of Mr. Rowley's division, and is mentioned as one of the officers who carried his ship into action with the most becoming spirit. He remained on the Mediterranean station some considerable time afterwards, as

we find him one of the officers composing the Court-Martial assembled for the trial of Captain R. Norris, at Port Mahon, on the 1st of January, 1745. His name, however, does not otherwise occur in the service; nor, indeed, do we find any proof of his having held any commission after his return to England."<sup>1</sup>

[He died on the 20th of February 1758.<sup>2</sup>]

With the official confirmation that John Lovett commanded the *Neptune*, it was delightful to come upon a letter of his written on board the *Neptune*, in a weary period of inaction. Whatever letters he may have written to his mother have not been preserved, for Mary had at this time given up her home in Dublin and had lost her old home at Claydon House, where for at least four generations the family letters had been preserved. But the following letter was happily addressed to the uncle, who had done all he could to forward Jack's career:

*Neptune*, IN HIERS BAY, NEAR TOULON.

May 2d. 1743.

"Honoured Sir,—It is with sincere pleasure that I congratulate you on your being promoted to the Title of Earl Verney, and indeed would not have been so long without doing of it, was there any news stirring in this part of the World worthy Your knowledge. The other Day, wee was a little alarm'd, it being reported the Spaniards was coming out of their Nest Toulon, and Wee all ready to get Under Sail to receive and give them Battle; but alas, it was nothing but a Spanysh Puff; the Occasion of the report was, as wee have since heard, the Spanysh Admirall and all his Ships gott their Topmasts and Yards up as a compliment to Monsieur Mirapois the French General of this Province, he Dining on Board the Spanish Admiralls. Ship. The next Day after, the Spaniards down'd with their Yards etc. again, so the Expected Battle Ended without loss on either side. Wee still remain here as an Embargo on them, and everybody knows well a Waiter's Birth is not over and above agreeable. We are 18 Sail of the Line and one or two more expected daily, two fire-ships, three Bombs, one Hospitall Ship, two Small Cruisers. Wee have divers reports here relating to the Brest Squadron, but none to be Depended on.

My Duty and best respects wait on Lady Verney, the young Ladies and Good Mr. Nichollson, with Service to all kind enquirers, and that You and Yours may enjoy all the Health and Happyness that this Transitory Life affords, is the sincere Wish—Begging leave to remain and Style Himself Hond. Sir Your most Dutyfull obedt. & Humle. Servant & Nephew. JNO. LOVETT."

<sup>1</sup> *Biographia Navalis*, John Charnock, 1797.

<sup>2</sup> Dec. 20, 1759, is the date given in Gibb's *Local Records of Bucks*.

The covering sheet is marked "Came out of the King's Dominion must pay" extra postage 1s. 4d. The letter is also marked as "Opened and Read in Marseilles May 16, and forwarded 17 May 1743 by your Lordship's most obedient servant,

(Signed) GEN.[?] WHASLEY."

The letter is beautifully written in the enforced leisure of the "waiting and watching" of the French and Spanish Fleets, as Nelson and Collingwood watched and waited outside Toulon half a century later. The English Fleet had already fought an important battle, when John Lovett was in command of the *Kingston*, but it had not been decisive and they were still watching the enemy fleets, when he commanded the *Neptune*.

We may hope that his mother saw something of her sailor son during his last years, as it does not seem that he ever married and she survived him about eleven years.

Major Verney Lovett was one of its officers when the 39th Regiment—now the Dorsets—went to India—the first King's Regiment to be sent there. His health there was not good, and after trying a voyage to China, he returned to England from India, by which he missed being with his regiment at the Battle of Plassey (1757) and getting his share of the spoil. He had put his money into £6000 worth of diamonds and a necklace of pearls. This property had a fortunate escape on his homeward voyage, for the three India-men, in one of which he was, were attacked by two Frenchmen, a line-of-battle ship and a frigate. He took upon himself the command of the small arms and contributed, as was acknowledged, not a little to their success. He used to mention, with great concern, an incident that happened at this time. When the ships were clearing for action, he met a seaman, with a little box of his, containing his diamonds, coming up with it to throw it overboard. With a fee and some entreaties, he prevailed with him to take it below again. The poor fellow did so, but as he came up again upon deck, a shot took off both his legs. The diamonds later helped to buy an estate and the pearls are still in the family, in the possession of Mrs. Bromley Barret, youngest daughter of the late Philip Cosby Lovett of Liscombe, who left them to her.

On settling in England, Verney, now a Major, acquired land in Soulbury and around the Liscombe Estate. He had also inherited under his father's will the £8000 realized by the sale of the Eddystone Lighthouse. Verney invested the proceeds of the Lighthouse



in an estate at Romford in Essex; he became M.P. for Wendover as a Whig—the side which the Lovetts had favoured from the Revolution.

Major Verney Lovett's name is in Cobbett's List of Members of the House of Commons, November 3, 1761. Major Lovett must have owed his seat to Ralph, 2nd Earl Verney. He became steward of the manor of East Hendred in the county of Bucks and a new writ was ordered, December 18, 1765, but his name is not in the House of Commons List of 1768. So after being a Member for Wendover for nine or ten years, he was probably less keen about politics than in the various interests of his busy life.

His health, however, became so uncertain that he lived chiefly abroad, returning occasionally to visit his mother, who lived in London, and only died in 1769, but two years before his own decease. . . . He was probably a great deal at Claydon, where he would meet his nephew, Jonathan, the owner of Liscombe, who persistently resided at Kings Will in Ireland, and would not go near the gloomy old home at Liscombe which his father had inherited from his great-uncle, Christopher, but had never visited. The second son of Jonathan was Major Verney Lovett's godson, and bore his name. The Major always declared that he intended to leave his fortune to this boy. However, in 1770, the boy's father, Jonathan, died, and while Liscombe and Kings Will went to the elder brother, also Jonathan, under the entail, the Major's godson, Verney, was left the property of Rahilty, near Tipperary, a not unsatisfactory estate. The Major was in Italy at the time of his nephew's death, but came home immediately to make adjustments in his will; by a codicil leaving the Romford estate to Verney, but the property adjoining Liscombe to the new owner, an eldest great-nephew, Jonathan.

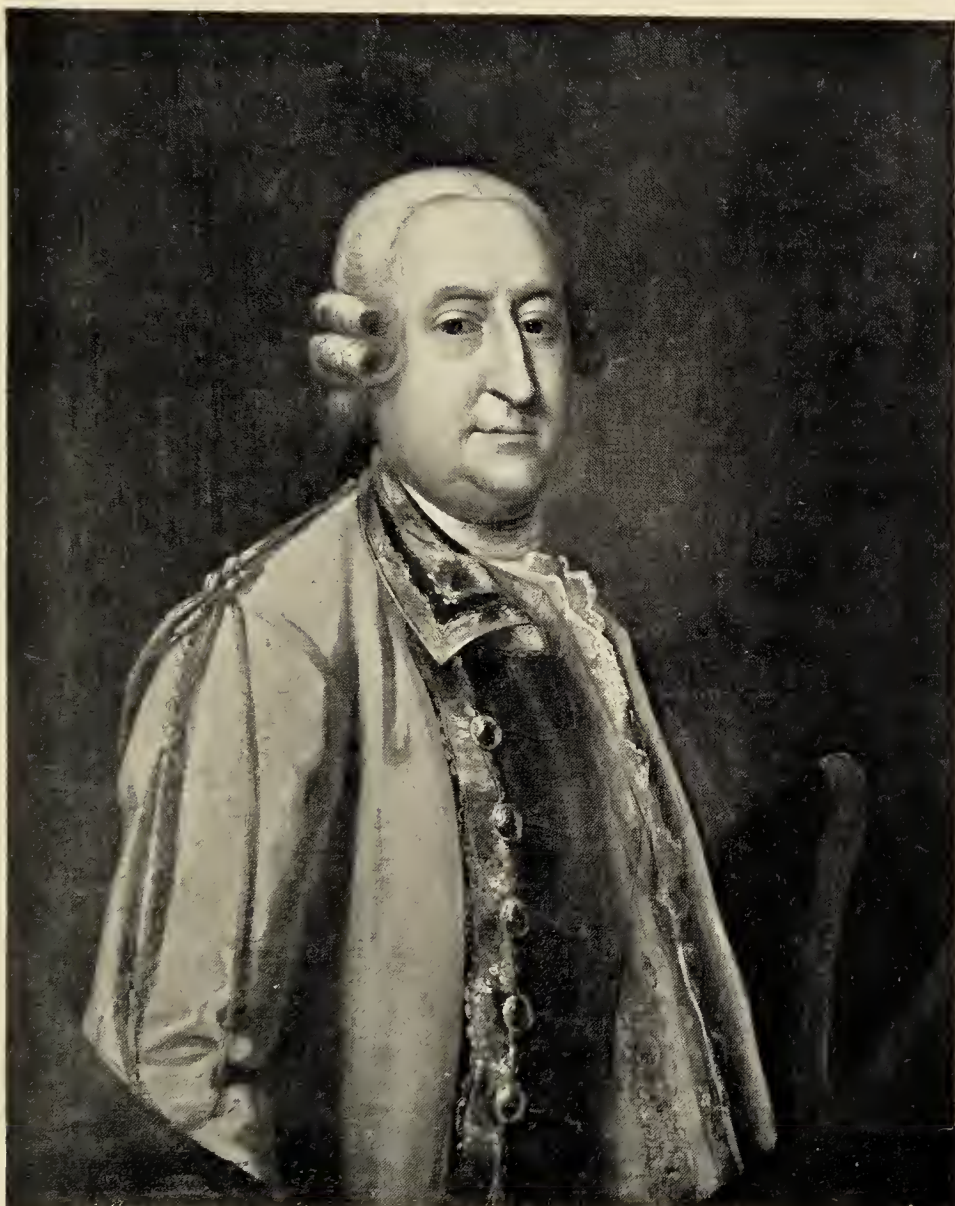
His mother had died the year before his return, and had been buried at Soulbury with his father, and the old man went to Epsom, where his health completely gave way. Godson Verney was a fellow-commoner at Trinity College, Cambridge, and he sent an urgent message to him to come to Epsom to see him, but—according to the undergraduate's subsequent account of things—he could not get leave of absence from the College authorities. This seeming neglect of his wishes so much annoyed the old man that he added another codicil to his will, leaving all his property to his nephew Jonathan; if he and his sons should fail, then Verney



and his sons, and after him to Sackville H. Lovett, the grandson of his younger half-brother, Christopher. This codicil was dated 12 Sept. 1771, and on December 10 he passed away alone at Epsom. His body was brought to Soulbury to be interred in the family vault, with those of his father and mother.

"His immediate heir, Sir Jonathan Lovett, as he became in 1780, later sold the Romford estate without reference to the heirs of entail, his brother, Verney, and his second cousin, Sackville, which led to a family quarrel, which was never healed. . . . When the last and eldest of Sir Jonathan's daughters came to the end of her life, the thing that evidently preyed upon her mind was the disposal of the Romford property, and all the unhappiness pertaining to it, for she developed the hallucination that she had swallowed the Eddystone Lighthouse."

". . . Yet the old Major of the Regiment, 'Primus in Indis', who was so proud of his family and anxious for its prestige, were he to return to earth, would doubtless find real pleasure in the fact that, though his property has all gone down the wind, his portrait hangs prominent in the house of the male representative of his family, and that among the names of distinguished servants of India, and well-known writers on its concerns, is that of Sir H. Verney Lovett, K.C.S.I. and Reader in Indian History to the University of Oxford"; and the ghost of his brother, the sea-captain, would be equally pleased to find a Lovett, as the first Bishop of Portsmouth, where ships and sailors are so numerous a portion of the flock, under the care of the Shepherd and Bishop of their Souls.



Major Verney Lovett, 39th Regt.



## CHAPTER XXXIII

### LADY BETTY AND LADY KITTY

It is curious in the Letters how little is said about the education of the girls of the family. That they were well educated is abundantly shown by their exceptionally good writing and spelling, in marked contrast to the letters of a former generation, but their very perfection of style seems to deprive their letters of individuality and hence of much intrinsic interest.

The girls had their riding-horses at Claydon, and their father reports a misadventure which must greatly have troubled their old kinswoman.

“ . . . Last Thursday before my Cousin Starkey’s Orchard (in Steeple Claydon) Miss Kitty’s horse kicked up behind and tossed her over his head, put out two bones of her elbow, and bruised her knee, they were set again in a few hours and feels as well as can be expected.” 15 Sept. 1734.

He adds later that Kitty’s arm and “my wife’s bruise in her face are better, but the swelling not yet gone down”.

The complete dulness of a family of educated people in the evening is very striking. The men read the News Letters, such as they were, but the ladies seemed to have no resource but gossip. They were no longer anxious to match wools for the beautiful Jacobean embroideries that employed their grandmothers, and although a flood of literature, both improving and amusing, was on the eve of publication, no girl seemed to read for pleasure; and in the absence of dancing or music, Mrs. Adams’ letter describes many homes. She is notoriously difficult to please. Her daughters are very popular in the family; Peg is often at Claydon and Albyns, and Bell at Baddow Hall.

“I own I live a solitary life in many respects,” she writes to Lord Fermanagh, “But I wold not haef you thinck it is for the absinc of 22 Aug. 1709.



my Children. I doe asuer you it is not; for I am very easey, and pleseid, and satiesfied at their absinc, not being a bell to keep them, I thinck it is A great mercy they are wher they bee. When Pegg was at home she aforded mee so littell of her company that I can not mis it now; and thou the towne is mor void of my relations and Acquaintanc then evar I knew it, but I being in my beloveid plas as you call'd it, my neibors being very kind often afords mee an hour or two of ther Companies or sends for mee in an afternoon to drinck A dish of tea with them. . . . I have not plaied A card a long time, but with my neesis at Hapney Loo or A peny at Gleek, and that but very seldom, tho' I don't deny but I woud play sum time, could I meet with Gamsters that wod play such low Games, for I can neither rit, reed, nor worck but very littell, and that but pittifully too, as you may witnes by this Scribell, for I have left writing to all most everybody but yourself. . . . I begg of you to distribet whot is dew from mee to all your good Companey, thay are too meney to be named by your old Aunt and humble Servant.  
E. ADAMS."

It was evident that the perpetual card-playing for penny and halfpenny stakes was for the sake of the occupation rather than for any thought of gain. Lady Betty and Lady Kitty lived at a time when there was a perfect torrent of books and pamphlets designed both for the improvement and amusement of the fair sex. Yet they grew up, neither lectured by Mrs. Chapone nor amused by Samuel Richardson's sentimental stories, which were about to revolutionize the books which girls might read. At all events, they were good and useful daughters at home, and in demand at all the family houses: but their education aimed at decorum rather than enjoyment, in contrast to the gaities of their aunts, who seemed to think any party incomplete which did not end in dancing.

In the early days of the new home in Chelsea, when the four Verney and the four Cave cousins were growing up in happy intimacy, Sir Verney Cave came up from Balliol on a visit to his uncle during the Long Vacation. He left them with regret and affectionate remembrances to "Master Verney, Master Ralph and my two little she-playfellows". The years went on, and in each family the girls had lost their elder brother; Elizabeth and Catherine Verney were in their thirties, and though their father's rise in the Peerage had added to the lustre of their names, no marriage had been arranged for either of them. They were much

valued at home and the relations probably thought their parents wanting in energy.

Their cousin, Mrs. Starkey, with whom they often stayed at Steeple Claydon, ventured to remonstrate—to whom Lady Fermanagh replied:

“Dear Cousin,—I thank you for your kind letter, and should be very glad to dispose of my children well. My Lord intends giving but half what you mentioned, apiece to his daughters, but as I have had an estate fallen to me by my Sister, and as my father made me an eldest sister, I intend to make Betty so, and am willing to make a handsome addition to her in reversion thereafter. But those things cant be so well fixt till we know who the gentleman is, and his proposals.”

There was a report current amongst some of their acquaintances that Mr. Lowe with a large fortune was courting Mistress Kitty about 1733. Mrs. Isted was furiously against such a marriage, and it does not appear that Lord Fermanagh had ever really favoured it.

Mrs. Isted writes to Lord Fermanagh from Ecton, much perturbed by the report that had reached her, though she cannot believe it:

“Considering how old Lowe had used Mrs. Stone, my Lady’s sister, the young man left but a very indifferent character at Oxford, as Mr. Palmer’s son could inform you, for he was there at the same time, they said there could be no inducement but the great love your Lordship had to money. . . . I could not imagine that your Lordship would consent to a match that would break her heart, as old Lowe has used her [aunt] in so barbarous a manner, and lately he has been dabling with her attorney that assists her in her Sute against him, which is very vile, but he has nothing of a gentleman in him.”

The Dowager has also heard the report:

“I congratulate your Lordship and my Lady of the agreeable match as is like to be with Miss Kitty and Mr. Low—and I hope and wish it may not be long before the same congratulation may be given to my god-daughter to whom I beg my tender affection may be given. . . . Jack Lovett is just come home from his sea voyage, both he and Mrs. Lovett with Miss send due respects and service to yourself and family.”

If the aspirant was at all like his father in his arrogance, his wealth and his vulgarity, he certainly would have been no proper

mate for the gentle girl whose quick and noiseless ways had earned her, at home, the name of "Lady Mouse".

We hear soon after this that she was ill and remained delicate for some months, but whether this was caused by the vexatious discussions about her marriage, we cannot tell. She had always been a great favourite with her brother Ralph, and when he married, he and his wife were always wishing to have her with them at Claydon.

10 Oct.  
1734.

*Lady Fermanagh to Mrs. Stone*

"Dear Sister,—I have had the misfortune to be overturn'd in my Coach, and have hurt my face very much, but thank God I am otherways pretty well, but this Misfortune makes it impossible for me to wait on you till Thursday; the post stays so that I can only add my Lord's service and the children's duty."

On March 22, 1743, Lord Fermanagh became Earl Verney in the Peerage of Ireland, and his son Ralph assumed the second title of Viscount Fermanagh—to the great confusion of all his respectful correspondents.

Mr. Butterfield would by no means be the last to congratulate Ralph, Lord Fermanagh, on his promotion. The rector writes:

15 Feb.  
1743.

". . . It was a great pleasure to hear that the Name of Verney was re-established to your Family but it would have been a greater, to have found it among the Peers of Great Britain rather than those of Ireland only. A Step This I hope, however, to the other and an Ernest of His Majesty's future Favour. Here I desist, knowing too well that your Modesty cannot bear anything that looks in the least like bordering on the recognising your just Merits much less on Flattery."

When Mary (Herring), Lady Fermanagh, was recommended to try the waters at Tunbridge Wells, she and her husband at once planned that the party from Chelsea should join them there and give the girls a little cheerful society. Lord Fermanagh gladly undertook to make the necessary arrangements. He writes to his father:

19 June  
1743.

". . . We have not much company, the following persons are here: Lady Egmond, Windsor, Carbery, Percival, Abergavenny; Lady Mary Howard, Lady Bab North, Counsellor Mills and Miss Ellers came here yesterday."

They were lodging upon the Walks, at Mr. Wood's, an ironmonger.



"Most of the Families who are here have their Butler with em, if they keep a person out of Livery in order to send them to Market, for the Ladies never hardly go into the Market. Wine is a dear Article here, tis eight shillings a Gallon and many choose to bring it with them. Knives, Spoons, Salts, Cruets, Castors, and Tea Furniture, which weigh but little, tis best to bring. Shall take your Lodgings, if I don't hear to the contrary. We have just received the news of the English overcoming the French and am sorry to hear Ld. Abermarle has lost his right Hand but I hope not his Life and this will perhaps disable him from venturing any more into the Field. You will make a longer stay than three weeks for the Season will be then but beginning in its Heighth."

24 June  
1743.

"I have taken your lodgings for Thursday sennight, but could not procure them at that time without allowing a Guinea—I don't know of anyone so commodious and fit for your purpose. Sir John Roydon and his Lady are come since my last. They endeavoured to make a Ball but were put to great Shifts. It was Lord Abergavenny's son's Birthday. The Gentlemen were Sir Robt. Long, Mr. Lake, Sir Hilderbrand Jacob, Mr. Hamilton, and Medley, the last of them stayed but two days, so they could make but 5 Couple to dance. Sir Robt. Sutton and Lady Sunderland are come for the Season. There are many Houses taken and in 10 days or a fortnight much company expected, and I believe the place will be more agreeable to you at that time than tis at present. Have askt the price of your horses and can bring em no lower than eight pence a night each horse, for hay, and to pay for Corn according to what they eat."

26 June  
1743.

"There is no occasion to bring any Curricombs, the stables being furnished with those things. . . . I forgot to mention you will want two or three china plates. Shall be glad if you will supper with us the first night as you will be in a hurry at your lodgings, which I will take care to see are ready. . . . Beef, Mutton, Veal and Lamb are the same price here, 4 pence per pound. Lady Thanet and Tankerville are come and next week several more Families are expected. The Wells begin to abound with ladies and scarce any Gentlemen are yet come. We send Wife's and my duty and love to Self, Mamma and Sisters.—Your most dutyfull son,

1 July  
1743.

FERMANAGH.

A cruet will be wanted."

We have no details as to how Betty and Kitty enjoyed their stay at the Wells. There is a note of Earl Verney's that his son and wife left Tunbridge on the 5th of August and stayed with them a few days at Chelsea before they went home, after which he rode



over to Mr. Knapp's at Little Linford and the same night returned to Claydon.

10 Sept.  
1737.

Sir Thomas Cave writes to thank Lord Fermanagh for being godfather to his "Young Man, who on Tuesday last was christened by the Old Family Name of Thomas and I pray God he may live to make due acknowledgements to your lordship in his own person many years hence".

Lady Catherine is again on a visit to Claydon, and writes to her father at Chelsea, wishing for the presence of her little niece, now six years old.

13 June  
1745.

"Hond. Sir,—Whenever you are pleased to let me hear from you I esteem it the greatest pleasure I can receive, & I return you a great many thanks for the favour of your last kind letter & the news in it. I think my Godmother ought to give Publick thanks for her great deliverance, we could not help laughing at the Calamity. Tis strange Miss Ellers cant make her Gentleman repent of his faults and learn to behave well as my Cousin Lewis does. I beg my love to Missy, and as I cant come to see her I hope she'll come along with you and my Mama and her Aunt here where I'm sure she'll be very welcome. I'll ask her pardon and be very good to her. We was at Addington a Tuesday, Sir Charles and Lady Tynt were gone to Katesby and Miss Jenny with em, and next week go to Haswell & Mr. Busby with em. They have never been here, none of em, not anybody but Mrs. Pillsworth. . . . My Sister has never sent me word wither Waraker could get any old Nets, because Dick Bates [the reformed deer-stealer, who is now after smaller and unprohibited game] says the fruit will be all spoil'd & if he cant conveniently they'll try to get some here. Which with my Duty to my Mama & your Self, & sincere wishes for the continuance of your healths & love to my Sister and pretty Missey, I remain Dr. Papa your ever most dutifull Daughter,

C. VERNEY.

My Bror. & Sister beg their duty & love."

Lady Catherine writes again to her father:

1 Aug.  
1745.

"Most dear Papa,—I should be as glad to see you and My Mama as you could me. I hope you won't put off your journey of coming hither but come soon, I'm sure you may perswad my Mama to come and I beg you will and bring my Missey, pray doe. My Bro. & Sister say they should be as glad as I, they say have presst it as much as they can, and every body in the Country wonders you'll never come. I beg you will. . . . I Thank you for what news you send me, & beg you'll let me hear from you as often as you can because tis such a pleasure to me. Pray let me hear how my Coz Lewis & His Lady go on, & if he visits there, & how my Godmother likes

[it]. I'll write to you again soon, & in the mean time I am my dear  
Papa's most Dutyfull Daughter,  
C. VERNEY."

As they become older, it requires more resolution on the part of  
the parents to travel.

*Lady Catherine Verney to her Father (sealed with her Mother's  
arms, the Paschal lamb)*

6 Aug.  
1745.

"Hond. Sir,—Your last kind letter woud have been much more  
acceptable to me, if it had made any mention of my Mama's & your  
coming here. . . . Mrs. Matthews & a Relation of theirs has been at  
Mr. Butterfield's two or three days, my Lady Denbigh & Miss  
Grinville is all the Company as is at Stow. Mr. Thursby & his Wife  
are at Dodershall. I hear by my Aunt Cave the Coniseuers go on  
as wise & as fast as ever. . . . My Duty to my dear Mama & Your  
Self & love to my Sister, as is all at present from, Dr. Papa, Your  
most [Dutiful] Daughter & Obedt. Humble Servt., C. VERNEY."

The Essex property continues to give Lord Verney some trouble.  
A would-be tenant, Thomas Hanson, at Canvey Island, writes to  
report that the sitting tenant, Nash, has done all that he ought not  
to do, and left undone what he ought to do.

"He has not cleared the Dung away from the Barn in all the time  
of his Lease, your Lordship allows him a considerable some of  
money to dow the Ditching witch is not done, nor the house witch  
your Lordship allowed him money to build he has not don, from  
your humble servant to Command,  
THO. HANSON."

1 Feb.  
1747.

*Lord Fermanagh to his Father*

13 Dec.  
1747.

". . . We design to be at Clifford St. on Thursday and propose  
to dine in the City on Friday, and on Sat. morning will be at Chel-  
sea unless the weather permits us to come before I go into the  
City."

*Sir Thomas Cave to his Uncle, Earl Verney*

1 June  
1748.

"My Lord,—My wife and self return your Lordp. our due thanks  
for your Congratulation on the Encrease of our Infantry, in which  
augmentation I think we are more to be depended upon than the  
Levies of the Allied Army. They boast and do nothing, we hold our  
peace and proceed apace. As for the Gender of the Young Recruit,  
we must be content with what God permits and it is some comfort  
to think that one sex may (in time) give Birth to the other. . . . If  
your Treaty with the Earl of Harborough proceeds I hope it will be

crowned with mutual Happyness to all Partys, especially those who enter the Holy State. At Northampton election I heard it mentioned at a Publick Ordinary. I wish the Proposal had been completed sooner or begun later that it might not have been an obstacle to our Happyness in seeing your Lordship etc. at Stanford this summer, a pleasure so long expected, as often lost that really I have not the Spirits now to encourage any hopes of enjoying it.

We poor Souls in the Country are sadly puzzled with regard to the prospect of peace, and heartily pray that the Darkness of this Nation may not be felt like that of Egypt, and also hope the Infection among Men will be providentially withdrawn as well as that of the Quadrupeds Kind."

The summer of 1748 was marked at Chelsea by the happy event of a marriage on the 27th of June of Lady Elizabeth Verney and Bennet, Viscount Sherard, afterwards 3rd Earl of Harborough. The Sherards were already connected both with the Verney and the Cave families. Margaret, *née* Denton, Sir Ralph Verney's aunt, married as her third husband the Honble. Philip Sherard and brought him the estate of Whitsondine, Co. Rutland.

That name had spelt Paradise to Mun Verney when it was the home of the lady he was courting, but it was a Paradise whose gates were shut to him, and now Whitsondine was to become the home of his great-great-niece, Elizabeth Verney. This marriage was the happiest event since the death of their son John. We have no details of the wedding, but Lady Sherard wrote very brightly, and less formally than was the custom of the day, to her parents.

Lady Sherard writes to Lord Verney a few days after the wedding, having left Miss to console Lady Mouse:

2 July  
1748.

"Dear Papa,—I thought it long before I wright to know how you & my most Dear Mama did, & that she is better & has begun to take her things, whitch will be to me the greatest joye this world can aford, & hope my Sister & Miss are well as all is hear; & for our Journey we Dined at Barnet & got to Welling after 9 & set out the next morning about six & Stopt at Balddok, & Dined at Biddesworeth & got to Huntington at 8, wher Sir Edward Larrance met us, & stayed aboute an hour & great number suped ther & whent the next morning a little after 5, Dined at Whansford & got home at near 9 & it seemes a very plesent place, but cant mutch account of it, not haveing bin over the house yet, and am extreemly oblidged to my Lord & Ly. & all the Family for ther great Goodnes to me; & now must beg Live to return your Dear Selfe & my Dear Mama my most Hearty thanks for all your great kindness to me, & my





Elizabeth [Verney], Countess of Harborough.





Lord joynes with me in Dutty to your Selfe & my Mama & Love to my Sister & Miss, which is at present all from, Dr. Sir, your most dutiful Daughter & Humble Servant to Command,

E. SHERARD.

All hear desire ther Service as due."

Elizabeth strikes one as perhaps the more capable of the two sisters, and Catherine as the most lovable, with her pet name in the family of—Lady Mouse. Their mother was quite knocked up with the excitement of the wedding, as she had been on the previous occasions, but in 1748 there was no "Charming Molly" left to nurse her and console her, as only a sister could do.

*Sir Thomas Cave to Earl Verney*

3 July  
1748.

"My Lord,—Your Lordship is very kind in giving me so early an Information of the alteration in your Family, in regard to which the Bride and Bridegroom have the United and Sincere Wishes of me and mine for the lasting Comforts that attend the Conjugal State in its greatest Perfection, and that in due Course of Years they may be as well provided to speak with their Enemies in the Gate, as those who wish these Events may attend their Conjunction.

Tho' I rejoice that this Transaction of Lady Sherrard's marriage on the one hand, yet on the other I feel my share of concern when I consider that the Young Lady's absence will not soon be unperceived at Chelsea; Tho' as far as is possible for one Person to supply the Place of two, Lady Catherine's Indeavours will alleviate the Want of her Presence.

. . . All Joys are lay'd with Grief, and I am very sorry to hear your Lordship's present Pleasures have any Diminution on account of Lady Verney's Indisposition, and I assure your Lordship we most sincerely sympathise both in your Concerns for her Illness as well as in hopes for a Speedy and Absolute Recovery. . . . We shall truly rejoice to pay our Salutes to you at Stanford.

My wife and Miss Rice joyn me in the best respects to Lady Verney and Lady Mouse, and I beg to be esteemed your Lordship's Dutiful Nephew,

THOMAS CAVE."

Lord Fermanagh's correspondence is as varied as ever. He has an urgent appeal from Joseph Byam to reconcile him to Mr. Joseph Byam, his father, "A Seedsman and Gardener at Philip's Plain, Bristol", in a quarrel which threatens to scatter the united seeds business to the four winds.

20 July  
1748.

Mrs. Jane Hill, their friend at Wendover, acknowledges the

23 July  
1748.

receipt of two dozen quarts of palm sack wine, and two dozen quarts of red port. She reports some changes, "I think we have abundance of Widdows in this Town".

3 Aug.  
1748.

*Bennet, Viscount Sherard to Earl Verney*

"My Lord,—I am obliged to your Lordship for the favour of yours, and think myself highly honour'd with your Daughter, & as I believe ther is not a better Woman in the world can never be thankfull enough to your Lordship for my happiness. We rejoyce greatly to hear Lady Verney is on the mending hand, hoping she will meet with a speedy cure. Sir Thomas Cave & his Lady are to be at Mr. Smith's soon, when we are to have the pleasure of seeing them. Lady Sherrard intends to write to you soon, she is very well & joyns with me in Humble Duty to your Ldship & Lady Verney, & our Humble Services to Lady Catherine. All here desire there compliments, I have the Honour to be, My Ld., Your Ldship's most Dutifull Son & Humble Servant,  
SHERARD."

The Bride writes again about her husband's home, Stapleford:

8 Aug.  
1748.

"Dear Papa,—I was extreamly rejoiced to hear by your kind letter of the 28th that you was well, & that my Dear Mama is better and is got downstairs, & hope in God she soon now will be quit well for all our comforts. I must beg the favour of you when you write to Claydon return my Aunt Verney thanks for her maney kind wishes to Ld. Sherard and me, a Fryday we was all at Stappleford, which I think is a much grander Place then Stanford, & in the new part the rooms are very Lardge and lofty, & in some of em the best Carveing that I have seen, & the Gardens very fine. Mr. Noell and his Sister Dine hear today, so must Conclude this, with Ld. Sherard's and my Duty to your Self, and my most Dear Mama, and Love to my Sister, from, Dear Papa, Your most Dutifull Daughter to Command,  
E. SHERARD.

P.S. All hear desire thear Compliments as due. My Eye is much better now, but Pool said I had better not wright aney more till it was well, which I hope it will in a day or two."

Sir T. Cave announces to Earl Verney the birth of another baby girl, who comes second in interest to a Northamptonshire election:

28 Apr.  
1748.

"My Lord,—The great Hurry and Bustle we (in this Neighbourhood) have all been in on Account of our late Election in North'tonshire, has been a hindrance to the Progress of all other Things, and among others in the occasion of my Silence to your Lordship's last Favour, not that I should have let the first opportunity slip after

it was over, had not a violent Cold attended with a Cough rendered me unable to do any kind of Busyness till this very day. I have made very free with the old discipline of the Whey Bottle and hope in a day or two more to find its effect indisputable.

As to our Election I believe a more Impartial one never was known or better Behaviour among the Gentlemen of each contending side, and the Sheriff in preserving the Golden Mean has gain'd an universal Character. The non-elected Gentleman and his Friends however are in some Wrath at their Disappointment and threaten to Petition, but surely they know the state of their case too well to do so, if they think the House will pay any Regard to such Proceedings as below have been universally esteemed faultless.

While I was in full Busyness about getting Mr. Knightley into his Chair, my Family at home was as deeply engaged in hurrying my Wife into her Bed, and on the 16th she produced a fine Lusty Lass, and both of them are so well as such Patients usually are, I should sooner have informed your Lordship of this Event, but for the aforesaid Impediments.

I believe she will soon be able to give your Lordship and the Ladys a hearty reception at Stanford, and wish your Determination was as certain as our Joy would.

Our Respective Dutys and Salutes with Miss Rice's Devoirs, attend your whole Circle, Your Lordships Dutyful Nephew and obedient Servant,

THOS. CAVE.

P.S. I should be glad of some account of the Window Bill and whether we may now stop up any Lights this year."

Mr. Samuel Tufnell adds his congratulations, "wishing Lady Betty Verney all the happiness she can well deserve".

9 Aug.  
1748.

*Sir Thomas Cave to Earl Verney from Edmondthorpe, Leicester*

13 Aug.  
1748.

"My Lord,—By the above date your Lordship will perceive that I am on a Ramble from home at the writing of this letter; my Wife & self being performing our triennial visitation to my late Parliamentary brother, Mr. Smith, for three or four days, & what will greatly encrease the Pleasure of our Excursion, will be the Payment of our Respects to the family at Whitsondine, and more particularly to Lady Sherard, on the late alteration of her State. . . . Before I left home I order'd my Keeper to kill a Buck and to send a Haunch by the Chester Coach, which will be in Town at the George and White Hart in Aldersgate St., and I hope the Weather will favour its Journey to London."



22 Aug.  
1748.

*Lady Sherard to Earl Verney*

"Dear Papa,—I am extreemly sorry to hear by your Kind Letter of the 18th that my dear Mama has had a return of the Gout in her Stomack, & hoped in God to have heard long this time that she had been quite well. . . . Sir Thomas & Lady Cave & Miss Rice was hear a Sunday, & dined hear a Wednesday—& Thursday we whear at Mr. Smith's, & on Friday we all met at Stapelford, & Sir Tho. said it was a much finer place than ever he thought it had been—a Saturday we was at Mr. Brown's, and this week we go to Sir John Heathcat's & Mrs. Roberts to dinner, & sune more Visits & next week Mr. Thornton's Family are all to be hear. Sir Tho. & my Lady desired Ld. Sherard & me very much to come to Stanford. . . . Pray when any body goes to London I desire they will by me a yd. of the same striped Musling of this big in the letter, and will pay my Sister for it when I sea her. This day Ld. Sherard is 39."

25 Aug.  
1748.

*Lord Fermanagh to Lord Verney*

" . . . I have sent a Loaf in hopes of Mama may eat a bit of it. . . . Grenville's Men were well Thrasht at Aylesbury Race."

Aunt Verney (Betty Verney) is staying with them.

23 Aug.  
1748.

*Lord Fermanagh to Lady Catherine Verney*

"Dear Sister,—I hope your Mama is got quite well. My design in writing is only to let you know that Sir Edwd. Lawrence sent me Word that he woud send me a Buck on Saturday by the Leicester Coach. I writ to him to desire him not to do it, but if he shoud send it will send a Haunch up by the same Coach that day, where the Coach inns in Town I don't know. The Coach comes from Nottingham & takes Horses at Leicester. The Place where it inns may be easily known as there is but one Coach, so desire you will send to see if there is any Basket directed for your Papa. Will send some Partridges with it if I can get any. Will direct the Basket to be kept till call'd for. I hope I shall not be disappointed. Have no news. With our Duty and Love where Due, am Your most affectte. Brother,

FERMANAGH."

Lady Sherard is staying with her husband's parents, the Earl and Countess of Harborough. She writes:

5 Sept.  
1748.

"Dear Papa,—I recd. the favour of your kind letter of the 30th, and am heartily sorry to hear that my most Dear Mama has had such a bleeding at the nose & is brought so week with it, & do most truly pray to God to hear it tis quite stopet & that she is better,

which will be the greatest Blessing and comfort to us all that we can wish for, & if the bleeding returns & she is no better, I hope you will be so good as to let me know & I can easely come up in the Stanford Coach for a few days to see her; & must now beg leave to give your self & my Dear Mama a great many thanks for the fine Barrel of Sturgeon which came safe last saterday, as likewise Ld. and Lady Harborough's compliments & thanks for the same. Mr. and Mrs. Thornton, Thear son & tow Daughters left us today, a Friday Ld. and Ldy. Gainesborough & Family dined hear, & a saterday we all Breakfasted at Mr. Sherard's, as did all Mr. Smith's family, so thear was about Twenty in all; & now must beg Leave to conclude this, with Ld. Sherard's & my Duty to your Self & my most Dear Mama, & Love to my Sister, from, Dear Papa, Your most Dutyfull Daughter to Command, E. SHERARD.

I shoud be glad if my Sis. woud send the yard of striped musling, if it tis not quite so fine nor the same stripe, in a frank. I recd. my Sis. letter today & am glad to hear that my Dr. Mama's bleeding is stopt & hope in God she will mend every day. which will be a Vast Blessing to me, as likewise to hear that you & my Sister are well."

*Lord Fermanagh to Earl Verney*

7 Sept.  
1748.

"... I am glad your venison was good, Pilsworth's Family dined with us yesterday upon the other haunch, they go to Stanford in a fortnight."

"... Lady Fermanagh has been ill these two days, and fancy she will have her old complaint, which tis impossible to remedy. . . . The Distemper breaks out amongst the Cattle in many places. Tis very bad at Pounden. . . . Last Northampton Fair has spread it in many places, some of the Tenants here bought Cowes there, I wish they don't bring the Distemper, for great part of Northamptonshire and Oxfordshier is infected at this time."

7 Sept.  
1748.

"... I hope Mama is on the mending hand, if the Air in the Country will do her any good we should be very glad to see you, Mama, and Sister here. We thank you for the Sturgeon, which came very sweet and good. Duke of Grafton sent half a Buck yesterday. . . . I fancy Mrs. Woodnoth has some papers relating to Thornborough Manor, particularly the Court Roll and the repairs of Thornborough Church. . . . they might clear up that affair still more if I could get them. As to the family that sold the Manor it would be of no use to them. . . . The Distemper is at 2 Places in Lee, and yesterday I was alarmed with the ill News of a Cow taken ill at Tomes of Bottle Claydon. I hope tis not the Distemper, tho' the Symptoms are very like it. It rages all over Whittlebury Forrest. . . . Brown Willis is just come in to dinner."

8 Sept.  
1748.

P.S. Lady Fermanagh continues much as she was, Mr. Wallbank gives her no hope of her going on, she is not confined to her bed."

12 Sept.  
1748.

Elizabeth Verney writes from Claydon to Earl Verney at Chelsea. She has no good news to send of Lady Fermanagh, and the Doctor seems quite helpless to prevent another disappointment to her hopes.

*Lord Fermanagh to Earl Verney*

13 Sept.  
1748.

"... Tomes' Cow is well again, I think it was not the Distemper. . . . Lord Cobham's Tenant has lost 28 Cowes within this month. Foster of Wendover called here yesterday, he is related to the owners of Kites Hill, and said he would enquire privately when that will be sold and let me know it. Stoke House is pulling down, and most of the materials sold for £140 (which must be exceeding Cheap) to four men of Bicester. They have the garden walls and everything about, it damages the estate greatly in my Opinion, and is a very imprudent action. I hear Sir Francis Dashwood is going to build a Steep at Wycombe and to pull down his present House."

17 Sept.  
1748.

*Lady Sherard, from Stapleford, to Earl Verney*

"Dear Papa,—I recd. the favour of your kind letter of the 17th, and am most heartily and truly rejoiced to hear that my Dear Mama is so much better, & hope in God with care she now will get strength and very soon be quite well, which together with your one health I am sure will be to me as well as all of us the greatest blessing we can wish for. Mr. & Mrs. Lester was hear & said they heard Sir Richard Atkins of Clapham was married to the famous Fanny Murray, & to Morrow we dine at Ld. Gainsboroughs, it tis said that Mr. Woolestone is in the same way that Mr. Felix Calvert is, but pray dont name this for fear it should not be true, & now must Conclude this with Ld. & Lady Harboroughs & all this Family's Compliments as due."

21 Sept.  
1748.

*Ralph Palmer, from Roydon, Essex, to Earl V.*

"My Lord,—I trouble Your Lordship with this to enquire after Lady V.'s Health, & That of Your Self & Lady Catherine. We have had the misfortune of my Brother's being seized with a very bad Fever, which has now Confined Him for a week. He has been attended from the beginning of it by Dr. Hale of Bishop's-Storford, an Old Physician of great Repute here; and indeed a very Able One. He has given Him the Bark, but hitherto without Success; and yesterday He blistered Him. We flatter Ourselves however that



He is not in danger. This Accident has put a stop to our Enjoyment in the Country. My Wife & Bro. join me in Respect & Complements to Your Lordship Lady Verney & Lady Catherine, and I am, My Lord, Your Lordship's most Obliged & Affecnte. Friend & Servant,  
RALPH PALMER."

*Lord Fermanagh to Earl Verney*

22 Sept.  
1748.

"... Mr. Piggot is better of his Apoplexy, but not quite well. He had been with numbers from these parts to choose a Mayor at Bedford & was returning with white Coackades in their Hats. Duke of Bedford did not oppose them, but will try it at Common Law & afterwards in the House of Lords. Ld. Northampton has declared he will ever oppose Ld. Halifax at Northampton as I am told. . . . The Distemper is at Mursley, Newnton & Shipton in Winslow Parish amongst Lowndes's Tenants. . . ."

"... I am sorry you did not keep my Horse longer as Mama liked him better than your Young Horses, but hope she is under no fears with them when she goes out now, which I hope she does daily. I am very sorry she is so indifferent still: I shoud think Asses Milk might do her service. I have two new milch'd asses here, either of which she shoud have if you judg'd proper whenever she pleas'd. . . . I had Pillsworth's Opinion last Week about the Stone Pitts as Ld. Cobham was carrying away very fast. He advis'd to open a Pit close to Ld. Cobham's & throw the Rubbish into Ld. Cobham's Pit, so on Thursday I open'd a Pit accordingly & Ld. Cobham's men left off Work and sent to Stow. On Friday Ld. Cobham's men set to Work again but on Saturday their Pit was so block'd up that they pulld down their Working Sheds & went away. I hope this will effectually cure him. . . . I Woud have gone up to have seen Mama, but thought the surprise of my coming to see her without having any Business might lower her Spirits & make her think herself worse, which might do her a great Dis-service. If she expected to see me I hope you woud be so kind to let me know it. Have sent up a Hamper with some Pears, but hope Mama will eat noen of them as they must be too cold for her."

25 Sept.  
1748.

He had previously sent from the Claydon Gardens "some Nectarines which I know Mama is fond of, some few Peaches, and three small bunches of the Ripest Grapes we have at present".

"... We kill'd a Stag but twas very poor and not fit for the spitt, it belonged to the Duke of Bedford, was sorry twas killed, but knew not that it was a Stag till after. They brought me word that a fat Buck, so I sent a man to kill it in Peter Hinton's ground. I sent an apology to the Duke, so whether he will send for it or not I can't say."

27 Sept.  
1748.



Lady Sherard has heard that her mother has been less well, and writes to inquire:

28 Sept.  
1748.

"Dear Papa. . . . Ld. Harborough often complains of great pains in his Stomack which I think is something of Gout & I hope he is a little better now then he has bin, & am sorry I have no news to send you for we have not bin out lately, so must conclude with Ld. & Lady Harborough's & all this Family's compliments as due, as also Ld. Sherard's & my Duty to your self & my most Dear Mama & Love to my Sister, from, my most Dear Papa, Your ever most Dutyfull Daughter to Command, E. SHERARD.

P.S. The Head Gardiner hear is like to die with a sort of intermitting Fever."

17 Oct.  
1748.

"Dear Papa. . . . I have spoke to Ld. Harborough about the coach & he says as it tis for us he desires we will have it made as we like best for it tis the same thing to him, & I asked him what his cost, & he said it was £77/16/od. & he had two box Clothes & no harness, & I think it will be best lined with red & think it must be Stage coach fashion as most make em so, & as two the sise & fashion I desire you will have it made jest as you woud for your self for that will be a satisfaction to me, for I know you are so much a better Judge then I can be or any body ellse, & if it tant to great a trouble. Ld. Sherard & I shall take it as a very great favour don to us. . . . my Ld. Harborough says he thinks that of seventy seven pounds will be to plain, & says if it costs more he shall think nothing of it to have it handsume. I beg you to return My Mama thanks for sending my things.

P.S. Mr. Sherard desires his Service to you and shall take it as a great favour if you can speck to Mr. Pelham [the Prime Minister] or any Body ellse that he may have a Cannon of Christ Church in the roome of the Bishop of Llandaff or Dr. Trevor, for one of em two is to have Sailsburey. I told him I thought you had no such intrest with Mr. Pelham as to ask him for any thing like that, & I was afraid if I did not wright he would take it ill, & hope you will not take it ill from me, as I could not well refuse him, & I said at the same time I thought Ld. H. one speaking was much better, & then he said the more the better, but you know his way of talking."

The latest account we have of the family party is in the spring of 1752, when the Earl and Countess Verney are at Bath in company with their married daughter and her husband, who have succeeded to the old Lord's title.

*Earl Verney, at Bath, from Lord F.*

23 Apr.  
1752.

"Hond. Sir. . . . I went last week to have insured your houses at Chelsea, but they don't insure again till the day before the policy expires."

Then follows a long account of the business between Mr. Davison and Mr. Duffield:

". . . Captain Chaloner's wife died last week and was buried at Steeple Claydon, Harper and William Webb came in a mourning coach with the hearse. Mrs. Baker is got pretty well again, and all her family except Mrs. Holroyd are in town. Mr. Herring has been very bad for four or five days, tho' he goes out in his coach every day with a Blisster on his head. . . . Wife joins in Duty and Love to self, Lord and Lady Harborough, with your most dutiful son,  
FERMANAGH."

The happiness of Lady Harborough's marriage had been tempered by the anxiety about her mother's health; and before the end of this eventful year, on the 28th November 1748, Catherine, Countess of Verney, died, buried at Mid. Claydon, 10th December.

We have no account of the passing of this good woman and affectionate wife and mother. The family were probably all together and no letters passed; this calamity was rendered still more tragic to the widower by the death of Lady Catherine in 1750, buried Mid. Claydon, 26th August.

Elizabeth, Lady Sherard, suffered like her sister-in-law from many disappointments. The infant mortality of the time was considered as inevitable as the other constant tragedy of the small-pox, and Elizabeth's married life was a short one.

The lonely old man must have revised his Will more than once. He despairs of seeing a grandchild at Claydon and looks more and more to "Miss" as the future Lady of Claydon; but for two years longer he shares with his "second son" the doings on the estate.

A gracious custom had grown up with the popularity of tea among ladies of quality in England, that a dwarf tea-table with all the implements of tea-making should be the special property of the lady of the house.

Mary (Herring), Lady Fermanagh, had doubtless brought her own to Claydon, but the tea-table and its plenishings that were specially connected with his beloved wife he leaves first to Lady Catherine, and after her death to "Miss".

## THE WILL OF RALPH, 1ST EARL VERNEY

*"In the Will*

Viz.,—I give all my late Wife's Jewels & her Gold repeating Watch with the Gold Hook, chains & seals thereto appendant or belonging; & also the Jewels, gold watch & plate late belonging to, my Daughter Cath. Verney, & also my Large Silvr. tea-table or waiter weighing upwards of 140 ozs., & also the cabinet or chest of Drawers that was the Dutchess of Portsmouth's, & my india dressing box in trust to be delivered to her at the age of 21 &c.

The Silvr. Tea-Kettle, Lamp & Stand, with Ld. Isham's Armes upon it, & the great Silvr. Cup & cover with the Stones' Armes upon it, are given to his Executor in trust for Ldy. Harborough for her Life, and then to Miss Verney at 21 years.

All the Pictures & Portraits at Chelsea, & also at Claydon, with divers other things mention'd in the Will.

*In the 2nd Codicil*

Gives Ldy. Harborough his Wife's little Iron Chest.

*In the 3rd Codicil*

I give & bequeath to the said Mary Verney, all such Sums of Mony as are in my late Wife's iron Jewel Chest, to be paid when the Jewels of my late Daughter Cath. Verney are delivered to her, to enable her to have the Earrings new set, & I give to her all the mony & Jewels in my Wife's iron Jewel chest, & all the mony & Jewels in the cabinet in the Trynk Room, to be delivered her at 21 yrs."

Lady Harborough left no living child, and her husband married again many times, and so hardly kept up his intimate connection with the Verneys.

## CHAPTER XXXIV

### FATHER AND SON

RALPH, Lord Fermanagh, was too good a son to wish to deprive his father of any of his public interests. The Earl had been elected member for Wendover in 1747, and he filled many public offices in the county. The joint control of Claydon affairs went on, whether Lord Verney resided at Chelsea or Claydon.

It was a time when a Justice of the Peace had many new local activities—the enclosure of the fields, which enabled the farmers to concentrate on larger holdings, was of much interest to Lord Fermanagh.

He writes:

“ . . . The Commissioners of the new Turnpike have met at Buckingham, Dutchess of Argyle and Lord North lent £100 each, Lord Cobham £50, Greenville and Lowndes £25 each, several gentlemen are displeased about the Commissioners, for Greenville has put on only those as he liked. Mr. Butterfield is still ill with the Gout.” 10 June 1744.

“ . . . Am a Commissioner of the Buckingham Road, but have not been at anything yet, Browne Willis came to desire my presence, if I could not come to desire I would lend £25 which was what the rest had done. I told him that I had built a Workhouse for the Town which was very sufficient, and if they had a mind to encourage that, I would not be behindhand with the Turnpike, so I believe I shall hear no more on that head again. They propose raising £500, which was a Trifle for the Members of Town and County to lend. . . . Mr. Chilcot called here last week, he went to Sir Thomas Lee’s, whose Garden I think exceeds Stowe infinitely in the Prospects and agreeableness. We passed by Sir Wm. Stanhope’s, who is laying outt a very large sum upon a House and Garden to very little purpose.” 19 June 1744.

P.S. The Post never came on Tuesday, so this letter did not goe, I forgot to mention Mrs. White was buried last Wednesday sen- 21 June 1744.  
night.”



28 June  
1744.

"... I believe the money for the Road will never be repayd, they make a Party affair of it that I question whether they will do much good. . . . The Town wants a Jayl and Browne Willis has been to beg for that, he has not opened a Subscription yet but I fancy will some time this summer. . . . Lord Goreing and Lord Abington's dogs killed a very old Dog Fox in Claydon Woods on Monday."

The enclosures obliterated so many public paths that it was necessary for the landowners "to set out other common highways as convenient for passengers and travellers to pass and re-pass". In short, if all the long-winded precautions of the lawyers' parchments were actually put into effect—the closing or diverting of a footpath was much more difficult in the reign of George III. than it is to-day. The county and the turnpike roads had to be measured.

The great road to London was duly provided with milestones, but when the surveyor left the only stable resting-place of the fifty-ninth milestone on the London road to make an authorized highway from Stowe to Buckingham and Chackmore, he had only the quaintest of landmarks to guide him. Everything within Lord Temple's Park seemed to be debatable ground. Sometimes he was desired to measure "90 yards back from a red painted gate, opposite a remarkable hole in the hedge, where three notches are cut out on a tree". Sometimes he had to measure "60 yards back from the Triumphal Arch"; at times the landmark was a large oak "by both sides of which the road passes and in that part of the lane called Dove's Corner"; a little further on there is a bush growing in the middle of the road, and the last measurement wants "60 yards of the seven miles to the steps in the front of the House".

The total distance from Stowe House to Buckingham is given as: 7 miles, 2 roods, 135 yards.

These computed distances were always shorter than the modern measured miles; and it would be interesting to know how long "the remarkable hole in the hedge" was officially recognized.

Before Lord Verney had ceased to take a share in agricultural experiments, it had been settled that Mr. Millward should make a journey into Wales to view the famous mountain sheep and black cattle, and purchase stock for the home farm.

Mr. Millward dons his roughest riding-gear and thickest boots, and having consulted the picturesque if ill-informed maps of the district, he finds "that Llanidloes is at the foot of a mountainous

country in Montgomeryshire and is just beyond where some of the graziers go, which is to Newtown in the same country". But before starting he congratulates Lord Fermanagh on a more interesting purchase because nearer home.

*Mr. Millward to Lord Fermanagh, in Clifford Street*

25 Apr.  
1752.

"... Oliver has been to look for holly but there is none fit for vaneering, for there was none above 4 inches square.

I am glad your lordship has bought Biddlesden and heartily wish that your Lordship may live long to enjoy it. It is a pretty, quiet, Estate as any in the County. I will do for the best in all respects in my Tour to Wales. . . . If they can be met with, it would be much the best to have 20 couple of Doggs, that are used to run together, if they can be met with on reasonable terms. I wish I might meet with a clever man, but I know not what to give him. . . . I must hire a Welshman to show us the method of managing the oxen.

*Mr. John Millward to Earl Verney*

Holy  
Thursday  
1752.

"My Lord,—I now give your Lordship an account of my Welsh Tour. I set out from Claydon on Sunday, 26th of April, and lay at Moreton in the Marsh in Gloucestershire the first night. The next day going through Broadway I was in hopes to have picked up some Hounds for there were several in that town, but I could get none except one that was lame and that would in no ways answer. We lay Monday night Bromyard in Herefordshire, there were some very small dogs not above a foot high belonging to neighbouring Gentlemen and there was none to be disposed of. Those very small Dogs my landlord told me would pull a Leach of hares down in a day. There are a great number of small enclosures about that place, and these little dogs go through the Hedges much sooner than the larger ones, so they suit that country best. . . . We heard there were no dogs in Wales but what was bought in Herefordshire and this wet winter had brought the sheep so down that they are not able to go a journey. After I had done conversing with Mr. Griffith I set out for Lanidlos. We Baited at Landrindod where the Wells are, I tasted of all the Waters; one of the Wells are called the Stinking Well and rightly named. . . . In another part of the common is a well called the Rock Water and another water as drops out of the rock very slowly is called the Brandy Water from the great strength it has. They tell me there is a great Concourse of people frequent this place in summer to drink these waters. All the way from Radnor is a mountainous, poor country to Llanidloes [Mr. Millward makes a better shot at the Welsh spelling] which lies upon the River Severn which produces a great

number of small Trout. We had a dish of them for supper. The next day being their Fair I picked up one pair of oxen and a pair of runts. The prices vary from £6 : 13s. to £11. Fodder is very scarce in these parts as the cattle in general are very poor, few had any flesh on em, nor any mutton on the sheep in the fair. I sent the cattle to Abbeycombwith [Aberystwyth]. I expected to have seen a fine horse as Montgomeryshire is a mountainous country and yet very fruitful because well irrigated, but in nothing more observable than for its excellent Breed of Horses, which are of most excellent shapes, strong limbs, and very swift. But this Horse Fair at Llanidlos in no way answered this description, most vile, Rascally horse fair that ever I see. . . . I stayed the night but repented of it tho I had the best bed and room in the house. The Welsh are agreeable people when they are sober, but when they get in liquor they are very troublesome and noisy. They kept it up all night, several of the top people and I left em at five o'clock in the morning in the same noisy way as they was in all night. I got to Pen y Pont about 9 a clock but that proved a very indifferent fair, I got to Radnor that night and made it my business to enquire after sheep but there was none but Hill Sheep and they was so very poor they did not care to sell em, unless they could have as much for them as when they are fat for they cost them nothing keeping, so they do not attempt to sell em until they get in good order. The only two things I wanted to do more in Wales was to get in men to drive the oxen and the sheep. . . . We tried for men but never one would go tho' they live so very poor in that country, yet they do not care to come from it, so short a time as a month or two. They can have 1s. a day digging turf to burn.

We heard of some sheep in some Hamlets belonging to an old Radnor parish, Master Griffith went with us the next morning on horse-back to those places and bought 20 sheep that were shorn at £7, some of em were half Fat. We bought some sheep there and 20 sheep in the wool. . . . I bought 6 sheep of my landlord, good, aged sheep at 8s. 6d. a piece which were all that he had. I bought of him 6 young sheep at 6s. a piece to make up the Complement. At last the farmer hoped me to one of his labourers if we could agree for the price but he asked 12s. a week and did not care to come under that to find himself everything. I told him that was very extrvagant but that I would give him 10s. a week for the month, so that I believe he will come to oblige, I could not have thought that I should have met with the trouble in getting a man, for it was impossible to go on without one."

Mr. Millward gives more details of the Welsh Fairs and prices and returns to Claydon not having accomplished much in his Welsh Tour.



It was too soon for mountains to be admired for their own sakes. They were still only troublesome obstructions to the traveller. "Dr. Syntax, in search of the Picturesque", some fifty years later, found it much more comfortably among the Oxford Colleges; and Plynlimmon and Cader Idris made no appeal to Mr. Millward's practical mind. He could only reflect on the small size of the mountain sheep, one of which he thought would hardly supply a meal to a portly Bucks farmer. The language perplexed him, and the little desire expressed by any Welsh drover to make a journey to Claydon, however well paid.

These letters of Mr. Millward's are in contrast with one written some years previously from "Gwersillt", Denbighshire, by George Shakerley to his half-brother, Peter Shakerley, "A Member of Parliament at Westminster".

"Honoured and Dear Sir,—I am going into Anglesea to see my old Friend, Mr. Robinson; I shall very probably meet with opportunities there of getting some good Brandy. If you have occasion for any, be pleased to let me know in a line directed for me at Mr. Robinson's at Monachty near Bodeddern in Anglesea, & I'll endeavour to procure it."

4 May  
1713.

The old coach road, which preceded Telford's road, went through Bodedern (Mr. Shakerley was anxious to compliment the Welsh with an excessive number of double d's), and probably Bodedern was the nearest place to Monachdy, where a traveller could alight. Monachdy (Monk's House) still attracts the antiquarian; its massive walls, used as a farm-house, are the remains of an ancient monastery, and still has a fine room with Jacobean panelling. A long underground passage, variously estimated at anything short of a mile, leads to the sea-shore. This was undoubtedly the resort of smugglers at various periods, but at the time of Mr. Shakerley's visit, when the fashionable brandy was taking the place of the clarets and burgundys formerly exported, his allusion to getting "some good brandy" at Monachdy is significant. This long passage may well have been the scene of smuggling tragedies; at any rate it has a bad name, and attempts to investigate it are discouraged.

Local histories of Mona were beginning to be told again; the western coast, most dangerous for ships, was so full of legends of hermit-saints, connected with the rocky creeks and caves, that though the sale of contraband spirits was conducted in a small



way all along the coast, such naughty words as smugglers and brandy were not shouted on the house-tops.

"My old friend, Mr. Robinson," was the chief land-owner and living in the house of Monachdy. He was kin to Nicholas Robinson of Conway, a former bishop of Bangor.<sup>1</sup>

The money market was very unsettled, and men of moderate fortune had gone over to France in fear of that most stupid piece of cruelty, the Debtors' Prison.

1 June  
N.S.  
1736.

*John Gray, from Boulogne-sur-mere, to Lord Fermanagh*

"Honoured Sir. . . . I shall for ever gratefully acknowledge your Honours Favours to me, I am not willing to trouble your lordship with relating the great hardships I and my poor wife and child have been reduced to since my troubles began. The spight and malice of my Enemies cannot be altogether unknowne to your lordship; how they endeavour to ruin me in all respects and where they thought I had any friends they did all they could to sett them against me by false reports. The malice of Dighton exceeded all bounds. I thank God I escaped their hands and got safe to France. . . . My wife has never been well since she has been in France, she is now gone to England to see if a Change of aire will do her good. My little boy is with me, he speaks the French tongue as well as he doth the English, I have got him into a schooll where his Learning costs me nothing. . . . I have a gentleman that has promised to help me to be Servant in some nobleman's family, where I shall be protected, if your honour will be pleased to give me a Charicter. I have acquainted him with what station I served your lordship. . . . Your lordship has known me a great while and her ladyship much longer, so I beg for my wife and child's sake you would do me this kindness. . . . It is the Custome in this Place for such unhappy people as I to go by wronge names or else our Letters would always be intercepted, so I go here by the name of Thompson. Be pleased to direct for Tho. Thompson at Maddam Robby in St. Martins Street in the high towne of Bologne sur mere, France."

The clergy too had their perennial grievances. The Rev. William White, about whom so much interest has been made, seems to have died insolvent as Vicar of Steeple Claydon, and his successor, Mr. Fraser, fared no better.

<sup>1</sup> *History of the Island of Mona*, by Angharad Llwyd, published by Ruthin, 1833.

*Revd. Stephen Richardson to Lord Fermanagh, from Godington* 5 May  
1741.

"My Lord,—The Parishoners of Steeple Claydon being so kind as to send a petition to your lordship in my behalf to succeed Mr. Fraser in the living aforesaid. If your lordship is not preingaged I shall think myself exceedingly obliged if your lordship will be pleased to bestow it on me at the parish's request, and will do my utmost endeavour to please them as I have done hitherto, as I have faithfully served the parish for almost a twelvemonth, I hope your lordship will be pleased to let me have an order to collect the Easter Offerings and the Surplice fees during Sequestration. Mr. Fraser dying insolvent, I stand a chance to loose some of my money, especially if his effects will not amount to pay his debts."

Sir Thomas Cave writes from Stanford to congratulate his uncle on his success at Wendover and to announce his own return as Knight of the Shire for Leicester. He is pleased to think

"that the same cause may often draw us together, viz. the service of our country.

Our election ended early on Saturday morning (the third day), the numbers were: 11 May  
1741.

For Mr. Smith	.	.	.	2722
For my self	.	.	.	2536
For Mr. Ashby	.	.	.	1744

Majority . . . . 792

When I tell your lordship we had a Sheriff of the greatest Integrity you will easily imagine my Partner and myself were returned."

The Verneys were very much mixed up with the Chaloners both in business and friendship, and especially with the naval Captain whose monument is in the chancel of Steeple Claydon Church.

*Captain Edwd. Chaloner from Berkhamsted to Earl Verney* 9 Sept.  
1743.

". . . I have sent your Honour in Closed the Book we talked of, a bout Our Sea Instructions too Peruse; and hope it will be worth your Inspection. My Spouse joins with humble duty &c."

The old Earl Verney as well as his son came in for many inherited friendships, and these he did his best to cherish. The grandfather, Sir John Verney, was always interested in local history, genealogy and heraldry. In this he had the assistance and warm sympathy of his most congenial neighbour, Browne Willis, of Whaddon Hall.

Browne Willis (1682-1760) was the grandson of a famous physician, Thomas Willis, of the time of Charles II., and his wife Mary, daughter of Dr. Fell, Dean of Christchurch. They had an only son, Thomas, who married an heiress, Alice Browne, who transmitted her name to her only son. The boy was educated at Beachampton, at Westminster, and at Christchurch, Oxford, and early took to the study of history. He had inherited a comfortable fortune, and at the age of 23 he was suddenly brought into notice by being elected member for Buckingham at an unexpected vacancy. He sat as member for Buckingham from 1705 to 1708. He was never elected again, but his interest in public affairs, and his gratitude to the town of Buckingham, lasted his life.

Browne Willis was a collector of books and coins, a connoisseur on church architecture, and a voluminous writer, always out of pocket by his writings. He was a generous restorer of churches at Fenny Stratford and elsewhere, and left behind him some valuable manuscript notes of churches which are still in the library drawers of the Bodleian.

He frequently acknowledges the friendly help which Lord Fermanagh, with his maturer knowledge, gave him in pursuit of his hobbies. He was of the age of John Lord Fermanagh's children, and long survived him. Like Palissey, he was ready to throw all his personal effects into the furnace in his enthusiasm. His appearance was said to be that of a scarecrow, and the only new garment he was known to have purchased was a large blue cloak he had bought for the Buckingham election in 1705, which did duty during the next fifty-five years of his life.

Browne Willis kept up his friendship with three succeeding owners of Claydon. He was always a welcome visitor, even when he called to solicit aid for the restoration of some old church or for the repair of some ancient monument.

His own example was the most cogent proof that he sympathized with the object of the subscription, as it was well known that he contributed, far more generously than he ought to have done, to every good object in the county.

21 Aug.  
1743.

*Lord F. to his Father*

“. . . There has been a tragedy in Butolph Claydon in the death of a tenant, Wm. Houlton. . . . I believe Tom King, the malster, killed him with drinking and sitting in his shirt after



it. . . . Browne Willis dined here last Thursday. He is about begging for £140 in order to build part of Buckingham Gaol. He did not ask me for anything, but came to let me know what he is about. I told him that I had been told by the Mayor and one of the Aldermen to contribute towards the workhouse, which Mr. Rogers and others had built. That they deferred their Donations then to build a new Gaol, but he made very light of them as if he had not succeeded there. It was said at Buckingham that the town of Market Harborough was almost burnt down."

There is a long discussion about the making of a cellar under the brick parlour; it will require two master builders and four labourers, and Lord Fermanagh wishes his father might decide on the spot whether the expense would be worth while.

" . . . We hunted a Buck in Claydon woods, and shot him, but he got away and made directly to Whaddon Chase. We follow'd him to Hornwood. Mr. Palmer leaves us next week. He drinks nothing but water and perhaps half a glass of wine in a day, and is very temperate."

8 Nov.  
1744.

One of the "worthies of Bucks" in Queen Elizabeth's reign was the scholar and statesman Sir John Fortescue. His great house at Salden has completely perished; at a sale in the eighteenth century the Verneys were said to have purchased a stone chimney-piece, which the following letter has identified. It is in the old part of the house, now the servants' hall.

*Lord Fermanagh to his father, Earl Verney, at "Little Chelsea,  
near London"*

3 June  
1746.

"Hond. Sir,—We reach'd Claydon on Saturday, & between Aylesbury and Hardwick met the family at Oving [the Pilsworths] going for London. Have view'd the Armes of the chimney-piece . . . should not the crest have been upon the helmet in stead of Fortescue's. That is but small, & if you had a mind to see it, could send it up in a Basket for the weight is but trifling. . . . Millward & his Wife were at Addington the Sunday before we came & Lowndes and his sisters came in. He was very Liberal with his Tongue about Claydon, & said that the Grandborough & Swanborn people had lost their ancient Spirit, for formerly they would not suffer any Rogues to be stopt up. And the Oxon road lay through the middle of East Claydon Field, to his Knowledge and much more to the same purpose. He then abus'd Pelham [the Prime Minister] & Greenvilles. . . . Wife presents her duty to self & Mamma & love to Sisters & jointly returns Thanks for all Favours receivd att Chelsea with your most dutifull Son,

FERMANAGH."



This letter was docketed by the recipient "Lowndes's Spight".  
Earl Verney had not lost his sense of humour.

He gives to his son a character sketch of the Peacock family:

11 Feb.  
1747.

"Miss Peacock's father was first footman to Sir John Forbes, a merchant in the City, who made him afterwards his Clerk, as Merchant and Justice of the Peace—Peacock married Sir John Forbes' Cook, of an ordinary Character, by whom he had the present Miss Peacock and one son, a profligate, who married and left one daughter, to whom he has given 500 pound. The Estate of Money and Land of £6,000 value has fallen to Miss Peacock by her brother's dying before he was 25 years old. Miss Peacock's Mother is quite deaf."

There were some men whose merits never could be overtaken.  
The Revd. George Olliffye writes to Earl Verney:

23 Nov.  
1749.

"... Your Lsps. particular wisdom and goodness may be so kind as to judge whether my abilities come behind the attempts of great numbers that have long shone in the world, whilst it is my misfortune to be overlooked."

The 1st Earl Verney is chiefly associated at Claydon House with a gorgeous coat of scarlet brocade flowered in many colours:

An out-door sign of all the warmth within.

He was a painstaking and affectionate, rather than a clever man.

We know not whether he died at Chelsea or at Claydon on October 4, 1752; his name appears for the last time on October 20 in the Burials of Middle Claydon Church and his son reigned in his stead. Lord Verney gained and kept the affection of his children, grandchild and neighbours, and when he went he carried with him the old style of reckoning, and he was probably much amused by the popular cry—"Give us back our eleven days!"



Ralph, 1st Earl Verney.



## BOOK III

1752-1799

“It is a fine thing for a great house whose history has been preserved. . . . Generally the women of the house keep up its memories, not the men.”

(BESANT.)



# DRAMATIS PERSONAE OF BOOK III

RALPH, 2ND EARL VERNEY.

MARY, COUNTESS VERNEY (*née* Herring), his Wife.

MAJOR VERNEY LOVETT, 39th Regiment, a Cousin.

SIR THOMAS ROBINSON, M.P. and Architect.

BROWNE WILLIS, Antiquary.

ARCHDEACON HESLOP	}	Friends who undertook arrangements with the creditors.
SIR JONATHAN LOVETT		
JOSEPH BULLOCK		

MR. MICHAEL BOURKE	}	Friends of Earl Verney.
MR. JOHN CROWDER		
MR. WHITELOCK		
DR. WEEKES		

DR. JAMES WALKER, a friend in Jamaica.

SAMUEL ROGERS, Clergyman and Poet.

MR. MACNAMARA, an implacable Creditor.

HONBLE. MRS. JOHN VERNEY (*née* Nicholson), afterwards Mrs. Calvert.  
"Miss", her Daughter, later Baroness Fermanagh.

MR. NICHOLSON, Father of Mrs. John Verney and Grandfather of "Miss".

MR. RICHARD CALVERT, Stepfather of "Miss".

MRS. KNAPP	}	Sisters of Mary Verney and Aunts of "Miss".
MRS. CALVERT		

CATHERINE CALVERT, Half-sister of "Miss".

MR. MILLWARD	}	Stewards of the Claydon Estate.
MR. WEBB		

Lawyers, Clergy, Creditors, Tenants, Gardeners, Keepers, Workmen,  
Distressed Persons, Refugees and Exiles.





Ralph, 2nd Earl Verney.

## CHAPTER XXXV

### AN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY MAGNATE

ON former occasions the death of the owner of Claydon had been a great local event; but Earl Verney, living at Chelsea and only signing papers sent up to him, had seemed more and more the sleeping partner in a large concern, managed by Lord Fermanagh and the capable steward, Mr. Millward.

Lord Fermanagh had been so content to continue in the rôle of the "Second Son", that his family had no idea how much artistic ability and soaring ambition was concealed under his conventional wig and commonplace conversation.

He had stood a rocket amongst the pea-sticks, when suddenly a casual spark had sent the harmless-looking rocket up into the heavens, to descend in a shower of golden stars.

Many circumstances contributed to give him a free hand. The deaths of his father and mother and of the dear little sister, "Lady Mouse", who so loved to stay with her brother at Claydon, had brought him many family portions that had been paid out of the Claydon estate. His great-aunts, the Honble. Elizabeth Verney and her widowed sisters, the Honble. Mrs. Lovett and the Honble. Lady Cave, were almost the last. This remarkable trio all lived to be over 80. Elizabeth died 5th June 1767, aged 86. She made her home at Bath, with long visits to Steeple Claydon, and showed her love to the Claydons by leaving her portion to apprentice boys and girls to useful trades. Her money still helps the children there, as she meant it to do.

Lord Fermanagh had bought with his father a large estate in the neighbourhood, but his money was as much scattered "to the waters, winds and rocks" as in Shylock's list of merchant's ventures: "He hath an argosy bound to Tripolis, another to the Indies, a third at Mexico, a fourth for England"; and there was another deeper leakage than Antonio ever knew, in the vast sums which



the borough elections cost. How priceless here some of his grandfather's prudence would have been, but Lord Verney light-heartedly and enthusiastically felt his means to be "notwithstanding sufficient".

Lord Verney and his father had done a good deal of useful building during the foregoing ten years, in the way of barns, stables, brew-houses and accommodation for the coaches which, following the hoop-petticoats, had become so wide. A stable-clock with a graceful cupola had been the subject of much correspondence and marked the hours during the succeeding century, when all other projected works had been abandoned.

The offices in the house itself had been remodelled and enlarged, and the sale (frequently mentioned) of the Great House at Salden supplied much cut stone and handsome panelling—so that the way was clear for the great changes that he had long contemplated.

There were no relations left who could estimate the kind of expense which the Claydon estate could bear.

There is indeed a legend that Mr. Millward retired discomfited to a delightful manor house in Botolph Claydon, and planted a green alley *pour y promener ses chagrins*, when his friend and master finally became bankrupt. But this was far ahead in 1782.

The first years in which Ralph, 2nd Earl Verney, ruled at Claydon must have been a Golden Age to every man about the place who had a head and two legs, and to every beast who could stand on his four legs and drag a load. Carts and waggons were much more in request than more genteel vehicles. The beauty and great size of the building were evident to every passer-by. There was probably a demand for foreign workmen, and the name of Patrioli has come down to us as a master mason for the finer kind of work in this big undertaking. But there never was a time when the Claydons were without capable and conscientious craftsmen. In the Webb family, three generations of able carpenters worked on the spot, and there was always a number of plasterers, bricklayers and blacksmiths to be found. The farmers, too, were included in this prosperity. Horses were needed for carting, and hay and fodder to any extent.

There was stone to be brought in from Oxfordshire, and well-burnt red brick from the little local kilns for the inner substance of the walls; and fair marbles, white and coloured, the raw material of genius, came up the Thames in barges to Hedsor's Wharf.





Mary [Herring], Countess Verney.

Ralph was known in the family as a keen politician and a Whig, when Whigs were desperately out of fashion, but it does not seem as if his nearest and dearest friends had thought of him as before everything an artist, loving beautiful things and first-class workmanship. It is curious and unaccountable that we have so few letters illustrating the happiest years of his life. Both at Stowe, and in other large houses in the neighbourhood, it seemed to be the fashion, a bad one, to employ an eminent architect for a few years only, and then to proceed without him, with or without his special designs. In this case tradition states that Robert Adam was employed both at Claydon and at Stowe, but it seems that neither Claydon nor Stowe is on the list of houses designed by Adam. Neighbours, indeed, were fully impressed with the large share Lord Verney took in this building, and his views for the planning of a large country house were, at least, very definite. His letters show how diligently he visited every mansion that came into the market. He cared for good proportions rather than for ornament; indeed too much gilding gave him a positive sense of nausea. He liked white marble and to get contrasts of colour with many kinds of wood, unpainted and untouched. He seems to have felt strongly that the house should be in keeping as a whole. He particularly disliked a large house with a suite of low rooms and no hall dignified enough to hold a large gathering, such as the exterior had seemed to promise.

But, whatever professional help Lord Verney had, his own ideal was very distinct and practical. The wing that he designed and carried out consisted of three large rooms, with very thick walls and unusually tall doors and windows. The chief one—the Saloon—is, as he had said, all that a room should be—without any gilding or artificial colouring, admirable for music, and a delight from the perfection of its proportions. He must have been extraordinarily happy in collecting books and beautiful works of art for its furnishing. It was built so as to stand as the chief room of a compact house, or to form the south wing of a more ambitious building. Lord Verney was acting Lorenzo dei Medici without the resources of even a small State behind him.

So little does Mary, Countess Verney, appear in all these activities, that we know not whether she was asked to help in the colour scheme of the new rooms, or only, when it had been duly upholstered, to sit upon the not very comfortable type of Louis XV. sofa.



Mr. Millward's name has dropped out of the new building correspondence, and Mr. Webb is acting as steward for the farms. The beauty of the work at Claydon impresses the whole neighbourhood, but how welcome would have been some of Sir John Verney's prudence to the man who went on building his tower without counting the cost.

The rooms over the Library and Saloon were sufficiently finished to be furnished. One bedroom was done in black and silver, of which a lovely little mirror alone remains. There were marble chimney-pieces, large enough to admit of the most generous log-fires, and into whose depths the old, iron firebacks—some apparently brought from Holland by Sir Ralph—could be introduced. It is easy to imagine Earl Verney's satisfaction in being able to hang up his Van Dykes with adequate space to display their beauties.

Lord Verney sent for a splendid mantelpiece from Italy, with a lovely wreath of babies, in very high relief, costing £1000, says tradition. The carvings in his new rooms were perfect in design and execution, the mouldings in each different; the ceilings in wood, wonderful in their variety and beauty. He seems to have had a passion for perfection in artistic decoration, and to have picked up choice bits of furniture wherever he could hear of them.

Instead of attending Parliament from his house in Curzon Street and supervising the work at Claydon, Lord Verney's evil genius prompted him to make his temporary home at Biddlesdon, where he settled his wife and the Claydon household, at a greater distance from both.

Letters from Browne Willis are still addressed to Earl Verney, but the title, with the friendship, has descended to his son. The antiquary complains that his conscientious work is little appreciated in the county,

14 Feb.  
1756.

"and so take the liberty to send half a dozen Couples that I want sadly to dispose of, and send my last Book of Bucks Town and Hundred, of which I have as yet sold only about 39 copies, and so the rest may be wast paper, which is a poor return for so much Labour and Expense. What money I have made has been returned to the Printer. I have still £80 to raise for him. I have drawn up Cottesloe and Newport Hundred more voluminous than Bucks Hundred but with pretext to print them; Ashenden and Aylesbury Hundreds are above the better part Done of Each and I have two Folios pretty closely wrote of the Chilton Hundreds, which I shall leave to Oxford; and would, [also] its purchase and

Publication of the whole County. I can leave 50 in Bank to give some neighbouring Antiquary (if any such could be found) and print them.

I doubt Sir Thomas Cave's Lucretius goes on slowly, I wish I could wait on him and put it forward. I heard your Lordship was, about a week ago, at Claydon; had I been able to have waited on you, it would have been a great pleasure, but I can go nowhere, so infirm as I have grown. As your Lordship is so near to Bp. of Lincoln, who has a house in Albermarle Street, I most earnestly and importunately wish your Lordship would engage him to hold his Triennial Visitation at poor Bucks. It might be as good as an Assize to the town and I would, if it cost me half a score pd., see that his lordship and the clergy should be nobly accommodated. Indifferent the Lord High Steward and Alderman Murgetty will be about it, especially if they know I endeavour it.

I hope your Lordship will like to see your chancel finely decorated by having two Pinnacles that are decayed restored, which will be done in less than a month, the stone being provided . . . nothing shall be omitted in my power to contribute to any public work in the town, to render it as it stands in title in all respects the grandest town in its shire. And I wish the Wells were new run at Gloucester for they are very indifferent, as several judges of them have observed, but I doubt I shall live to see any great Improvement in that town—who am, my Lord, Your Lordship's most obliged and devoted servant to command, BROWNE WILLIS."

The good churchman has his desire, and the Bishop was willing to make a visitation to Bucks. But Browne Willis is always the champion of the ancient city of Buckingham, and is very suspicious of any attempt to induce the Bishop to make his headquarters at Newport Pagnell or Aylesbury. He makes an urgent appeal to Earl Verney to be present at Buckingham for the Bishop's visitation. 6 May 1756.

A few days later the unhappy antiquary is laid aside by a cough and sore throat, which, though he has been "blooded etc. for it", has not yielded to treatment. Browne Willis is much troubled that the authorities of Bow Brickhill have for years neglected their church, which the rector and patron have been endeavouring to "have taken down". He calls Bow Brickhill, from its fine situation, "the Pharos of the County", and he is taking various steps with the parishioners and the Archdeacon's Court at Aylesbury at all events to delay this "notorious scandal" of pulling down "the Chapel", as they call it, "till after the Bishop's Visitation. I have been drawing up a Representation of the case for your lordship's 15 May 1756.

perusal and your opinion of it. The gentlemen in these parts, whom I have talked with, are unanimous for keeping the church”.

There is so much more to be said that it is to be feared that the length of Browne Willis' arguments may in some cases have lessened their effect. He is so invariably in the right and so generous in his personal contributions to the cause for which he pleads, that it is impossible not to feel sympathy with his unselfish efforts. His exertions are not limited by the needs of the county; after a bad attack of gout in 1757, he dictates, before he can write, about “the case of Huntingdon, and his earnest desire to have a Choristers school at Wavendon, partly by means of reviving an old endowment”. It says much for the personality of this good man that his visits were always welcomed at Claydon, though some elaborate scroll for the repair of a church or the founding of a school was generally projecting from one of his ample pockets.

Happily much honest work, which seems to fall to the ground unrecognised, is able to help future generations in a way which would have cheered the apparently neglected author.

Mr. Madan, lately librarian of the Bodleian Library, writes:

“Browne Willis' bequest of 110 Mss. Volumes came to the Bodleian in 1760, and forms a valuable part of our Topographical collections. They are largely in Dr. Willis' own notes on which his printed Survey of English Cathedrals was based, and we preserved a large number of records of monuments and epitaphs which have perished. . . . He is by no means forgotten in our Library and is numbered among our Benefactors. The Mss. have not been printed but have supplied much information to authors writing on his subjects.”

We hear of Lord Verney driving over from Biddlesdon on a Sunday summer's evening (accompanied, one hopes, by “my good Lady Verney”) to view the progress of the unfinished building in the absence of the workmen and to dream dreams scarcely grander than he hopes to see completed. Meanwhile, it was a joy to collect furniture, books, not too many of them, and old china, and to plan for future concerts in the Saloon, which was specially suited for music, and where an organ has recently been installed in the niche he built for it, and exactly the size of the one that he designed.

It seemed that everything necessary to the eighteenth-century magnate was concentrated at Claydon. Lord Verney was a collector—a patron of art (especially if the artist needed pecuniary aid)—



and a generous helper of the distant relatives who appealed to him. He was, as ever, the friend of the unbeneficed clergy, who never ceased to bombard him, each with their special merits and claims. He was an F.R.S., and deeply interested in Arthur Young's promised improvements in agriculture, though the famous *Travels in France* were not published until after the Earl's death. According to the fashion of the day, Lord Verney aspired to being a patron of struggling literary genius. Among his protégés was Robert Bloomfield, who, after suffering "the most squalid poverty", without being able to afford paper on which to write the not very inspired lines which yet swarmed in his head, suddenly attained notoriety by his poem of "The Farmer's Boy".

Oddly enough, a shadowy Samuel Rogers, a clergyman, older and apparently unconnected with the author of *Italy*, was writing to Lord Verney, chiefly about money tangles. He, too, claimed to be a poet, and his verses were little worse than those of the younger poet and critic of the same name; he is scarcely noticed in the histories of the time. He was a great admirer of the work of Lord Verney, who accepted his Ode on Claydon.

#### POEM

If Grandeur not to be surpass'd,  
If Judgement, Elegance, and Taste  
May justly merit Praise,

Th' Imperial Dome where these unite  
By Verney rear'd on Claydon's Site  
Must warm Encomiams raise.

All who survey it with Surprise,  
Struck at its royal Air and Size,  
Shall own it truly Great.

Admire the Richness of that Mind  
That Grandeur thus with taste combin'd  
And Elegance with State.

Others the Sculptors' Art may crave  
Awhile to rescue from the Grave  
On storied Urn their Name.

You your own<sup>1</sup> Monument have rais'd  
Thro' distant Ages to be prais'd  
No venal Bust of Fame.

<sup>1</sup> Lord Verney was his own architect, according to Samuel Rogers.



This was sent by Rev. Samuel Rogers to the Rt. Honble. Ralph Earl Verney, on his magnificent seat at Claydon in the County of Buckingham.

24 Nov.  
1781.

" . . . Would Lady V. wish to have any Epistle of Ovid or other Composition inscribed to her Name? If yea, your Lordship has nothing more to do than communicate your desire which operates with me as a command."

Bath,  
16 Dec.  
1781.

*Rev. S. Rogers to Earl Verney*

"My Lord,—Business of Parliament, I hope, and not illness has been the Cause of your Silence. As to Mr. Burke [Bourke] Indisposition I fear may be the Reason of his not writing. As I shall insert several of Ovid's Epistles in my collection, I wish to know if inscribing any of the translations of them would be pleasing to Lady Verney and Yourself. I have had a smart fit of the Gout which is pretty well over; but nothing like what I us'd to have either as to severity or Duration, tho it is two years from my last. Inclos'd I send some covers which I will beg your Lordship to write as soon as convenient and return them my Lord, by Post to, my Lord, Your Lordship's very dutiful and Humble Servant,

S. ROGERS.

P.S. I wish your Lordship the Compliments of the approaching Season."

18 Feb.  
1770.

In 1770 Lord Verney is laying out his gardens, and receives a large consignment of plants from Brussels. The factor at Ostend will draw on his account five guineas for the 500 plants, half a guinea for the expense of plucking them, for packing and carriage to the boat, and the expenses there may have been at Ostend. ". . . If proper care is taken to pluck up the weeds that grow round the plants, two or three times the first year, this is the only care they require and an absolutely necessary one."

The Belgian nurseryman gives full directions about the planting out of the trees, and he desires to know the quality of the ground—whether it be sandy or clayey; if it's cold, dry, or wet, and what winds chiefly blow there. "I may be able to give you some useful advice that experience in all kinds of agriculture has taught me. I desire this at least, being a greater friend to humanity than Mercenary Views."

17 Sept.  
1770.

Mr. Joseph Cafferena writes from Garaway's Coffee House that he has failed to sell the India bonds Lord Verney wished to dispose of, but as he imagined "that his Lordship might be short of Cash

he has borrowed £700 and sends another £50 Cash by the bearer". A fair sample apparently of the way in which Lord Verney's money affairs were carried on, even by his most devoted friends.

*J. Bullock, from Caversfield*

16 Dec.  
1771.

"My dear Lord,—I received your Lordships favour and beg leave to return our thanks for the obliging present of Oysters. I hope the Major has made a good Will. I congratulate my Lady on her false prophecy, for she always said he would die at Biddlesdon. Your Lordship will see how necessary a settlement is between us by the following account which we looked over together four or five years ago. . . . When you have seen what balance remains you will be so good as to send me a Bond. We all join in best respects to your Lordship and my Lady. I am with the greatest truth, Your Lordship's most affec. and faithful friend, J. BULLOCK."

*The Rev. Potts Davis, of Soulbury Place, to Lord Verney*

6 Feb.  
1774.

He makes an application on behalf of Mr. Santham to be appointed as attorney for Mr. Beckford in keeping his Court Roll.

". . . I suppose, my Lord, you have heard of the Joy in Mr. Lovett's family on the Addition of a very pretty little Lady, very like the smiling Father; the Lady Mother is in a Brave way, and tho' there are many rooms in Liscombe House, it is very promising that they will be every one well filled. I should repeat no Grievances, but last summer's rough cast crumbles and tumbles, o cruel Frost! The marble Chimney pieces come at last from the Land of Cakes! Stoke Inclosure now in Agitation, pray, who cou'd tell me that David Gwin of Dallyharris pays his Addresses to Miss Verney? To hear that my Lord and Lady Verney are in good health and spirits will be great Joy to my Lord, Your Lordship's faithful and Respectful Chaplain."

It was about this time that happily (or unhappily) Lord Verney met a spirit, as unfettered by any considerations of prudence as his own, in Sir Thomas Robinson, architect and M.P.

But for the happy discovery by the Lady Rachel Verney of a correspondence between Earl Verney and Sir Thomas Robinson from 1768 to 1777, we should know little or nothing of what were certainly the fullest, and to him the most eventful, years of Earl Verney's life. These "Letters of an Eighteenth Century Architect" have been carefully edited by Professor Patrick Abercrombie, with all his professional knowledge and his regard for Claydon, and

must be read in the published numbers of the *Architectural Review* for June, July and August 1926. It is a very amusing correspondence.

In the new design, which together they planned, the three large rooms already built constituted the south portion of the long western front, the centre of which was a circular marble hall with a dome, and a ballroom 90 ft. by 50 ft. by 40 ft. high, with various reception and living rooms behind it.

As if the magnificent new designs for Claydon House to be transformed into something more like the palace of Stowe were not enough, these two reckless artists started a fresh scheme which at first was likely to repay the thousands laid out upon it and upon Claydon.

The Palace of Pleasure at Ranelagh for some years entirely eclipsed every other place of amusement and yielded a large dividend to the shareholders, of whom Lord Verney seems to have been the chief. The gardens were a great resort, patronised by the King's sons and by any foreign royalty on a visit to Court. Handel was writing the music for the water-pageant on the Thames, in which young ladies of quality consented to appear in white, and the occasional fête of fireworks was as brilliant as ever. It was therefore a singular combination that large sums were passing on both sides—from Lord Verney to Sir Thomas Robinson, as architect, and from the latter on account of their joint enterprise of the Ranelagh Gardens.

But Ranelagh proved a disastrous plan—it was easy to see how, through some accident, large sums were used, without full authority, to improve the approach to the Gardens. There was not sufficient room for the wide coaches to turn round, and the King of Denmark's lacqueys complained of a complete want of proper accommodation. By the time this was provided their royal master was in Berlin, and very little of the gold trickled to Claydon. Here was ample material for a quarrel, and it came. Lord Verney never answered letters, and there was a regrettable coolness between the friends. Sir Thomas had promised himself to make Claydon the "noblest and most perfect piece of architecture in the kingdom", but he died—prematurely for his many projects—in 1777.

The building at Claydon went on, as the plans had been most minutely worked out, but, for the first time, there appears some anxiety on financial grounds.







Lord Verney's Inlaid Staircase.

The circular marble hall was apparently completed; only the statues, which were coming from Italy, did not yet fill their niches, but Lord Verney's joy in what was already accomplished was very great. White and coloured marble and well-seasoned mahogany were still arriving at the wharf at Hedsor. Bernascone, an Italian master-workman, settled at Buckingham, was still engaged in making fairy creations in plaster, but he and other craftsmen, while only their very best work satisfied their employer, found it increasingly difficult to get their bills paid.

Earl Verney was a much better judge of the proportions of a cornice than of the honesty of a middleman, and he seems to have been cheated by successive clerks of the works, who were there to protect his interests.

Strange that "the second son" who could write in such detail to his father, when their joint enterprises were concerned, seemed whimsically unable to answer his architect's most urgent questions; or to look into the accounts of the men who were shamelessly defrauding him.

The lovely staircase was still in the making in the centre of the house; each step inlaid like a delicate marqueterie table, the walls ornamented with medallions, and the "hypæthral fenestration" garnished with marine babies. It was right to find balusters "sortable", and he tried one carved piece of work after another, of every size and shape, mahogany pierced work, leaves and scrolls, which were lately found lying in the "oxhouse" and over the pigsty. At last he threw them all away, and put up wreaths of wheat and scrolls in bronze, exquisitely elegant, which "rustle as you pass", says the old guide-book.

Castles in air, instead of disappearing in the clouds, were acquiring form in real stone and marble. If not too stout in that age of beef and port wine, how much time he must have spent on the scaffolding, watching his ideas coming to life in the choicest materials. It does not seem to have been a lively time for the amiable Countess. She, poor soul, sat alone in the Saloon, a figure much too small for her magnificent frame. She may have patiently listened for the arrival of the coach which took her back to the less correct but more comfortable chairs at Biddlesdon.

Cracks were appearing—the first being the death of Sir Thomas Robinson in 1777, and the failure of friends who considered a LOAN to be the same thing as a GIFT. But still the building went on,



These golden years at Claydon were not free from menacing clouds, but on the whole we reach prosperously to the year 1780. Catherine, Lady Fermanagh's insistence that a member for a Bucks seat must have a house in or near London had borne the fruit that she desired. Her husband and her son were regular in attendance. During the years that Lord Verney was building, the Opposition, led by Fox and Rockingham, were fighting a losing battle against the King's treatment of our American colonists, and his resistance to any domestic reform. King George had no Marlborough to atone by his brilliant strategy for the mistakes of the politicians. In this case, the military operations were as futile as the policy was provocative.

His disinterested course cut Lord Verney off from any Government office or subsidy. It must have been a real pleasure to him to be able to put his brilliant cousin, Major Verney Lovett, into Parliament for Wendover in 1761, and thus to attach him to the family traditions in Bucks. But the Major's interests were not primarily political, and he was not returned again.

In the first divisions on the principles of the Slave Trade, and in the later ones declaring war on the colonists, now named rebels, locally it was Stowe against Claydon, and Stowe was disastrously victorious, though acting with all possible loyalty and good intentions.

All sorts of legends were current about Lord Verney's ostentatious magnificence. His friend, Browne Willis, describes "A brace of tall negroes, with silver French horns, behind his coach and six, perpetually making a noise, like Sir Henry Sidney's Trompeters in the days of Elizabeth, blowing very joyfully to behold and see".

## CHAPTER XXXVI

### DISASTER

THE clouds were gathering at Claydon; year by year, fresh companies were failing in which Lord Verney had invested, and if we had had access to his private writing-desk, this unsigned scrap—perhaps never sent, but certainly representing his relation to some of his most intimate friends—would reveal the dawn of his anxieties.

“I confess freely to you, that you would have been the last person to find out ways to vex and trouble me. I do not wish to keep you out of income but I did not think you would have called on me at a moment’s warning. This money is my own and I must say that it should not have been put into your name at all, if you do not give me an immediate order to Mr. Chamberlaine you use me most unkindly, for it was as you were told from the first destined for another purpose, which it will be infinitely inconvenient to me to fail in. The least I can expect from you is to stay a little and I will settle with you, almost as you please tho’ the expenses of your election incurred by your own choice don’t seem to me fairly to belong to me. But I don’t wish to dispute anything with you, but I beg you not to fail to send me to order to Mr. C.”

It would be spoiling the generosity of the writer to try and affix a name to a friend who had proved so disappointing.

When we remember the fulsome flattery with which he had been addressed from the time of Mr. Butterfield’s notes to him as a schoolboy we can imagine how in his old age the following would strike him. It is from a creditor and is an almost ludicrous contrast to the obsequious letters that of old his Lordship was wont to receive.

“Death you may suppose may make an alteration with respect to temporal affairs, yet remember that honesty and honour will and may expect to meet in after Life a Station higher than the

2 July  
1790.



highest if debated by meanness and a Conscience where whilst living the Worm dies not; remember you are not immortal, a Day will shortly come when you with all the world must Account for every Action, then how will you appear? I ask no favour yet am determined for to have my Right; you say I am insolent, yet I would have you learn to know that once insulted I never will be twice, neither will I suffer any man however dignifyd to do it—the law is open and the Law shall have its Course. I remain, my Lord, your Lordship's &c.,  
THOS. SELBY."

In contrast to this abuse, we get from another correspondent some idea of the magnitude of the sums in question.

17 May  
1782.

*P. Smith to Earl Verney, from Fulham*

"My Lord,—I was honoured with your favour of the 15th inst. I sincerely and with much concern Lament the very ill treatment you have received, and I think no two men in this kingdom have been so Duped by such villians as your Lordship and myself, and I may very justly say my loss has been nearly £100,000, your lordship's I do suppose much more."

*Rev. Samuel Rogers to Earl Verney*

"Your expressions of friendships with pleasure I receive and take the Liberty to request your lordship on the occasion to deliver with your own Hands the enclosed to Lord Derby and to see he reads it, as his Mind cannot be very easy thereat although I wrote to his lordship to assist me with a £100 and acquainted him of my miserable situation, and unless I procure by Bills or Cash the sum I am indebted to your lordship execution will immediately take place against my Body etc. Lord Derby's Mother was my first cousin and Lord Stanley promised to procure me some Employment on the Change of Ministry which is I thank God at length accomplished; I know he has nearer relations that also want assistance, but they will not accept of the small income that I will. . . . I have even condescended to request being in his lordship's Household, that you will say is too much, as his Kinsman but something must be done not having one shilling to help myself. You have been much misinformed in regard to the Living for even in that I have been tricked . . . the particulars I will inform you of when I have the honour to see you."

If the old Samuel Rogers was but an indifferent poet, he was certainly whole-heartedly trying to help in his friend's financial difficulties.

*Rev. Mr. Rogers to Earl Verney, from Bath*

11 Aug.  
1780.

"My Lord,—As Mr. Messiter of Wincaunton the most eminent Attorney in this County and acquainted with all the monied people in it will be with me at Bath on the 24th inst., if your Lordship thinks proper to send me the precise Sum You wish to raise and the extent of the Security you have to offer for it with all such other circumstances as your Lordship knows will be demanded—as Receiver—where the Estate lies &c., I will with great pleasure lay the whole before him."

"... Yesterday on my Return to Bath I found the inclosed which I transmit for your Lordship's Perusal. The Respectability of Messiter is a circumstance on which I build much as well in my Expectations that He will be able to doe the Business if practicable as that Justice will be done Your Lordship. . . As I labour at present under severe Head-Ach I will attempt to say no more on this or any other subject, than that I am with the greatest Sincerity my Lord, Your Lordship's Very dutiful and Humble Servant,  
S. ROGERS."

30 Nov.  
1780.

"My Lord,—It is now near five Weeks since my last to your Lordship, in which I enclosed you Mr. Messiter's about Mortgage. This unusual Silence in your Lordship alarms me, with fears of Illness or Disgust. If the first I shall be unhappy in the confirmation of them, if the last I can only say I have not deserved your Displeasure; nor can recollect giving any just Cause for it. How is Michael? I hear nothing from him but often of him in the Papers. I will trouble your Lordship to accept the Compliments of the Season and present them to Michael and inform him that Doctr. Howard and I dissolved Partnership on Saturday last in a very ungracious Manner. Complaints my Lord are a very disagreeable part of correspondence: mine shall be as short as possible; I will only say that Doctr. Howard is the '*meanest*' of mankind and I am sorry, truly sorry, he ever came into my House; but do not think I blame Michael, who recommended him; as I know He did with a benevolent View and was as much deceiv'd in the Doctr. as I was. I have it in Contemplation to write the memoirs of Solomon the third, as soon as I am at Leisure, that all who read it may know the true Character of the Imposter. But excuse the Disgression; and believe me with great truth, Your Lordship's Very dutiful and faithful Humble Servant,  
S. ROGERS."

1 Jan.  
1781.

Knowing of the constant detailed letters which Lord Verney was wont to write every day about Claydon matters to his father in London, it is difficult to understand why he was so negligent in writing to the friends who were working so hard for him, and

perpetually asking for replies. He was so fully engrossed in his great architectural projects that it seemed hard for him to give his mind to what seemed a minor interest.

7 Jan.  
1781.

*Rev. Samuel Rogers to Earl Verney*

“My Dear Lord Verney,—Your favour I receiv’d this Day, I am almost overwhelm’d with Confusion and the first part of it. Either my Lord my senses or memory are much impaired indeed; or some Demon must have taken advantage and sown tares amongst my Wheat if there is any Expression in my last that could offend or even bear with Violence the Interpretation your Lordship insinuates as your Apprehension of it. Be assured, my Lord, my Esteem for your Lordship amounts to as near veneration as possible, and will always prevent I trust, even the remotest Suspicion of a tendency to offend, and therefore I hope no equivocal Expression, the use of which I avoid with all imaginable Care, will never be constru’d unfavourably. Since I sent you Messiter’s Letter I have apply’d to Mr. Stackpoole a very monied Gentleman of Irish extraction to accommodate (Anonymous) with 30,000£, but Government Prices are so much more tempting to this Levitical Tenius who has just subscrib’d 60,000£ to the next Loan, that there are no hopes of Success thence at least at present. Tomorrow is the Meeting of the County at Gloucester. I shall be there, if I am well enough to venture on the journey: at present I am but so, so. Capt’n. B. arrived yesterday at Bath and this Morning is set off for Gloucester. The Contest I suppose will be warm, as the Tories of this County are very self sufficient and boisterious with the Duke of Beaufort at their Head—I can very readily believe your Lordship’s Declaration of sorrow and Concern at the Quarrels of friends; but this is begging the Question I mean as to the term ‘friends’ as Doctr. Howard can be no man’s friend unless He can live out of him at the same time. This my Lord did not suit my temper and Circumstances at the time the Doctr. was with me; so we dissolv’d Partnership and the Doctor is left to starve by Himself instead of living on me. But pardon this Episode. For further particulars of the Doctr. to save trouble I will refer to your Lordship’s Secretary, Mr. Walker. If your Lordship means by ‘American News’ the Desolation from the Hurricanes, I have read the melancholy Accounts over and over: if our troops or Ships have suffer’d by Defeat, I am a stranger to it, and should be glad to have an Account of it. I will trouble your Lordship for a Couple of Dozn. of franks. ‘To Revnd. S. Rogers, Bath’ as soon as your Lordship can send them with convenience, to my Lord, Your Lordship’s Very dutiful and Humble Servant,

S. ROGERS.



P.S. Comptls. of the season to Your Lordship, Mr. Burke [Bourke] and all friends,—Pardon me for informing you that that noble Doctr. who values himself not a little on the resemblance of his Name to that of his Grace of Norfolk left my House witht. paying a single farthing. Pray tell Mr. Burke [Bourke] this.”

“It is with Pleasure I inform your Lordship that I am like to have a large Subscription which will set me ‘Rectus in Curia’ I hear but poor Account of the noble Doctr. who has claim’d both my Ode to Lord Carlisle and that to the Chancellor. I am, my Lord, with due Respect, Your Lordship’s very dutiful and Humble Servant.  
S. ROGERS.”

“My Lord,—I only write to inform Your Lordship that I have this Evening sent off the Cheeses by Wiltshire’s Bath Ways which inns at the Swan on Holborn Bridge will I suppose be in town on Friday at farthest. But I have directed them to be left till call’d for at old White Horse Cellar in Picadilly which I think is but a step from Curzon Street.”

“My Lord,—Your favour I recd. this Day and much oblig’d to your Lordship among a thousand other Kindnesses for your Care of the Cheeses. If they prov’d good, it will be still greater pleasure to hear it. I can only remember my obligations to your Lordship; I do not pretend to return them; and your Lordship is continually enlarging the number by accepting Intentions for Acts.”

“My Lord,—Presuming on your Lordship’s Permission to have my Letters directed to your Lordship’s at Mrs. Dalby’s, Bath, I have perhaps imprudently desir’d my Corresspondents to address their answers thus. One only has been receiv’d so address’d but as your Lordship has not given Notice to the Post Office in London of such address: it was charg’d and double too, to make it still more comfortable and this, my Lord, will be the Case of all others, unless your Lordship will be kind enough to give immediate orders or Notice: which in my vast extensive Correspondence in the prosecution of the Work in Hand woud be sufficient to ruin a Bishop: much more a broken Parson. Permit me then, my dear Lord to request you will not only give immediate Notice of Permission, but at the same time order the Office to deliver all Letters so addressed as if by your previous permission, though unannounced, that may be now in their Custody, or at the Office at Bath.”

“My Lord,—Second thoughts, they say, are best: since my sealing the Packet containing the Case, it has occur’d to me that you should state, if not the one which I do not recollect, that Samuel Spencer is Belimer’s Representative and I think it is material also to state that the Estate convey’d to you is worth in the worst of times nearly double the Mortgagee’s Demand consisting of almost



fourteen hundred acres of Land tithe free and let for £935 per an. and capable of still farther Improvements: that the Land tax for the whole is only about £35 per year and the Poor Rates very low; not amounting to six pence in the Pound. The Prayer of the Bill does not I remember go to the Sale of the Estate; but only to the payment of principal and Interest and costs: and that in times like the present when money is rented by Government at 7 per cent a preclosure, where the Premises in Mortgage are so much above the Mortgagee's Demand is an unparallell'd and an intolerable Hardship. There are not wanting Instances where both a Decree in Chancery has been set aside by the Court of Chancery as in the Case of Doctr. Blair for titles in Burton Coggles, Linc. under Northington in 1765 and even of Acts of Parliament: as in the Case of the Duke of St. Alban's concerning Durham Yard now the Adelphi. If these hints meet with your Lordship's Approbation I shall think myself happy in communicating them. They were admitted in the respective courts above mention'd upon the adduction of subsequent proofs properly substantiated: and I make no Doubt but Similar Proofs properly supported will operate in this. The Judgement you go upon may perhaps fail, as it was given after the Decree for preclosure issued, but then You may have recourse to mine which was granted before a Bill was so much as fil'd. As I am still weak I cannot be so explicit as I wish, but if anything farther occurs which I judge material for You to know I will not fail to give you early intimation of it. Find out Jones if you can. I am horribly afraid of some secret blow. However I have done all an honest Man can do in offering him the whole Living for his own management. I am, my Lord, Your Lordship's Very dutiful and Humble Servant.

S. ROGERS."

26 Oct.  
1782.

"My Dr. Lord,—Your Letter has made me very uneasy nor will my Peace of Mind be restor'd till I hear from you on the Subject, and find there is no Reason to suspect Duplicity or Deceit; and that no Disappointment has prevail'd: if it proves otherwise, I shall never endure the man again so long as I live. But merely as no Benefit and result to himself from deceiving your Lordship I shoud hope Vanity, Affectation or Severity of Manners woud never induce him to attempt it. But be matters as they may I beg your Lordship will give me some account of the matter as I fear the worst. The Detail of the Principal leaving town on the Day you came by express appointment of his Agent and has an ugly appearance, and looks much like untruth. He gave me the Residence of the Principal—Chigwell in Essex—but not his Name—Assuring me the money had been ready some months—and that a survey of the security was alone wanting to complete the Business. But your late Account of matters brings to my Recollection a suspicion en-

ertain'd of him by our friend at Bidlesdon, which however I was inclin'd at the time to think ill founded and premature; but now have my Doubts: Affection of Consequence unpossess'd was the Source of that also. if Mr. M.'s apprehensions were right. By this time Your Lordship has completed the Intelligence I wish'd respecting the Crown Livings in Bucks. I will beg the favour of six or eight covers to 'Mr. Thos. Rogers near St. Neots, Hunts', and four to 'Mr. Walter, Bookseller, Charing Cross, London'. I arrived at Bath on Thursday Evening tolerably well. When your Lordship and Mr. M. come to town to reside I mean to send you a Carcase of Welch Mutton. I wish therefore to know the time of coming. I wish to be put into the Commission of the Peace for Westminster and Middlesex; or if I miscarry in this to be made Bishop of Bidlesdon on the Death of Cotes, as I apprehend it tenable with any other Preferment, should your Lordship not be engag'd for the nex and Mr. M. not dislike to have me for a neighbour.—Your obliged humble servant,  
S. ROGERS."

"My Lord,—As this Gentleman to whom the inclos'd is to be directed has lately had a Suit with Hill, and recover'd £996 of him, I have apply'd to him to know his Attorney and Council, that I may employ the same below. Please therefore to frank it and send it by the Post as soon as possible, the Address—Col. Money, Pisford, near Northampton: To be forwarded to Pisford with Speed from Northampton. That for Mr. Tasker I will trouble your Lordship to the Penny Post. Forgive me my Lord these Liberties, I am asham'd of them; but they seem unavoidable to the present Situation of, my Lord, Your Lordship's much obliged friend,  
S. ROGERS."

Saturday.

Messieurs Wilson and Mansfield's opinion about Earl Verney's affairs:

". . . I know not what to advise in the present embarrassed situation of Lord Verney's affairs. All that can be done seems to me to be to procure a Conveyance from the present Trustees to those Gentlemen, who are now willing to undertake the Trust, and then for one or more Creditors to file all bills against such new Trustees for a sale. . . . Such a sale cannot affect the rights of any Mortgagees or Creditors and it must be subject to their rights."

28 Feb.  
1785.

22 May  
1785.

The names of Archdeacon Heslop, of Michael Bourke, and of Mr. Twinbarrow occur amongst those who are anxious to unravel the complicated story of Lord Verney's liabilities. So many of his friends owe him money that one has the impression of his being "more sinned against than sinning". In 1769, Edmund and Richard Burke owed Lord Verney £25,000 between them. In 1784, in a

schedule of sums due to him are the entries: "Rt. Hon. Edmund Burke, £11,000; Wm. Burke, Esq., £20,000; no security except honour." In 1783, he sued Edmund Burke in Chancery for a sum of £6000 lent for the purchase of Beaconsfield, but failed to establish his claim.

No one knew the reason for this failure better than Burke himself. Lord Verney had given Edmund Burke his first introduction to Parliamentary life by nominating him for Wendover, and he had given William Burke a seat at Great Bedwin. His friendship with the latter seems only to have led to his embarking in unfortunate speculations. Edmund Burke had a truer friendship for Lord Verney. In 1774, Lord Verney had to ask Burke to find another seat, which he did at Bristol, as he could no longer bear the expenses of Wendover elections. Burke bitterly complained to the Duke of Richmond that Lord Verney's services had not been recognised by the Whig leaders. "I believe no man in England", Burke wrote, "without the exception of another has been so indulgent, humane, and moderate a landlord on an estate of considerable extent, or greater protector to all the poor within his reach. . . ." If he would have temporised and joined the Court party "he would have had neither the least uncertainty nor a shilling's expense in his elections".

West India property fell heavily in value and his East India stocks greatly depreciated. It is much to be regretted that none of Edmund Burke's letters seem to have been preserved at Claydon. He is reported to have stayed there on several occasions and to have written one of his famous political pamphlets at Claydon. Possibly in later years financial complications somewhat interfered with their private friendship. (*Dict. of Nat. Biog.*)

There is an election story of Wendover in 1768:

Tenants being voters occupied their houses at nominal rents on condition of their voting as their landlord directed. Rob. Atkins, a lace-dealer, undertook to carry the election against Earl Verney. At the last moment Sir Robert Darling, former Sheriff of London, was proposed and carried by a large majority. The refractory voters were immediately evicted and had to seek refuge in huts, hovels, barns and tents. Hence a suburb of Wendover was called Casualty, which became Cazzelty. Contrition was expressed and most of the voters got back their houses; but this was not forgotten. In 1784, when Lord Verney's affairs were going badly, votes were



put up to the highest bidder. A party of electors were gathered outside the town; a stranger arrived in a post-chaise. Whence came he? "From the Moon." What news from the Moon? He had brought down £6000 to be distributed. Hand it over. Job Ord and Robert Burton were returned.<sup>1</sup>

Wendover was disfranchised in 1832; it had been represented by John Hampden, Richard Steele, Edmund Burke and George Canning.

It would be scarcely possible and certainly very tiresome to follow every detail of the complicated story of the debts, loans and mortgages, and they were again complicated by election results. It might seem with his great interest in county matters and the many Bucks boroughs affording seats to his friends, that Lord Verney ought never to fail of getting a seat as M.P. But this was not at all certain. Wendover, for instance, was hotly contested for a number of years by the Grenvilles and Verneys. And though, at the end, the Verney influence prevailed, there were gaps in the elections results which left Lord Verney as the unsuccessful candidate.

The rapacity of the freeholders, especially at Wendover, made the results uncertain; and moreover, with any return that could possibly be upset, a Parliamentary inquiry, involving the member in further expense, was conducted by his opponents. These additional disbursements induced Lord Verney in 1785 to give up the seat he had won.

It was possible that somebody interested in the fees extorted from prisoners for debt might try to secure his person. The very idea of this kind and clever man being possibly seized and incarcerated in the vile and filthy Debtors' Ward of a London prison is too horrible to contemplate. And yet, if he failed in one of his elections, it was possible that these harpies might pounce upon him. He is therefore, on more than one occasion, hurried over to Calais, Boulogne or Amiens, if only for a few days. Such an election was the one of 1784. We know that Lord Verney could not bear canvassing, especially among his own tenants. He was used to let friends carry on whatever amount of visiting was necessary. We have a vivid account of the greater activity of his opponent, in a private letter of William Cowper, whose sympathies were all on Lord Verney's side.

<sup>1</sup> *Bucks Miscellany*, by Robert Gibbs.



29 Mar.  
1784.

*William Cowper to the Rev. John Newton*

"... We were sitting yesterday after dinner, the two ladies and myself, very composedly, and without the least apprehension of any such intrusion in our snug parlour, one lady knitting, the other netting, and the gentleman winding worsted, when to our unspeakable surprise, a mob appeared before the window; a smart rap was heard at the door, the boys halloo'd and the maid announced Mr. ——. Puss<sup>1</sup> was unfortunately let out of her box, so that the candidate, with all his good friends at his heels, was refused admittance at the grand entry, and referred to the back door, as the only possible way of approach.

Candidates are creatures not very susceptible of affronts, and would rather, I suppose, climb in at a window, than be absolutely excluded. In a minute, the yard, the kitchen, and the parlour, were filled. Mr. G—— advancing toward me, shook me by the hand with a degree of cordiality that was extremely seducing. As soon as he and as many more as could find chairs were seated, he began to open the intent of his visit. I told him I had no vote, for which he readily gave me credit. I assured him I had no influence, which he was not equally inclined to believe, and the less, no doubt, because Mr. A—— addressing himself to me at that moment, informed me that I had a great deal. Supposing that I could not be possessed of such a treasure without knowing, I ventured to confirm my first assertion, by saying that if I had any, I was utterly at a loss to imagine where it could be, or wherein it consisted. Thus ended the conference. Mr. G—— squeezed me by the hand again, kissed the ladies and withdrew. He kissed likewise the maid in the kitchen, and seemed upon the whole, a most loving, kissing, kind-hearted gentleman. He is very young, genteel, and handsome. He has a pair of very good eyes in his head, which not being sufficient as it should seem for the many nice and difficult purposes of a senator, he has a third also, which he wore suspended by a ribband from his button-hole. The boys halloo'd, the dogs barked, puss scampered, the hero with his long train of obsequious followers withdrew. We made ourselves very merry with the adventure, and in a short time settled into our former tranquility, never probably to be thus interrupted more."

1784.

This was considered at the time as one of the most important of the contests then raging throughout the kingdom.

There are few letters of Lord Verney's about it, but we owe this account to J. E. Fowler, Esqre.

<sup>1</sup> His tame hare.—*The Life and Letters of William Cowper, Esq.*, by William Hayley.

"The Candidates were Sir John Aubrey, the Hon. T. Grenville, and Lord Verney. The poll lasted the full legal time of fourteen days. . . . My father had heard from old people, resident in Aylesbury at the time, many curious stories of the manner in which this contest was carried on, and the acrimony shown by each party to the other.

It appeared that Lord Verney was the independent and popular candidate, and every means were taken to lower him in the eyes of the electors, and during the poll a portion of the furniture was brought from Claydon House and publicly sold by auction, under the order of the Sheriff, on the market hill of the town. The most remarkable fact was, however, the cause of his lordship's defeat. Up to the last day of the poll it was uncertain which way the Ashridge or Bridgewater tenantry would poll, and it was at last decided that they should vote against Lord Verney.

When the constituency of any borough or county could not poll one vote an hour, the poll was considered closed. On the last day Lord Verney was somewhere about thirty votes ahead of Aubrey, and the roads were so bad from the Ivinghoe or Ashridge district that the voters could not make their way to Aylesbury without great difficulty; and about eleven o'clock in the morning the Verney committee, sitting at the Bull's Head Inn, found their man was safe, as there was only another quarter of an hour left for the hour to be up when the poll was closed, and they had discovered that the Ashridge contingent could not arrive before twelve or one o'clock. While they were congratulating themselves on their certain success, a violent supporter of the party, who was their agent for the Buckingham division of the county, galloped into the town, rushed to the hustings, recorded his vote for 'Verney', and hurried at once to the committee room, and with great glee told his friends that 'he had just given a plumper for my lord'. 'By God, Sir,' exclaimed the Chairman of the committee, 'then you have lost our election', and sure enough it did, as it kept the poll open another hour, which gave the Ashridge tenantry time to arrive, and Lord Verney lost the election by twenty-four votes, and this from the over-wrought zeal of a partisan who ought to have reported himself to the committee before he had been to poll.

The Hon. T. Grenville, 2264: Sir John Aubrey, 1740; Lord Verney 1716; majority only 24.

The poll began on Wednesday, April 21, and ended on May 6, lasting, with the nomination, sixteen days."<sup>1</sup>

On this occasion Lord Verney's friends hurried him away to Calais and Amiens, where he found himself amongst a hungry set of petty English debtors, who at once assailed him in perfect confidence that he could satisfy their creditors.

<sup>1</sup> *Recollections of Old Country Life*, by J. K. Fowler.

It is a strange anti-climax—in exile among his shabby-genteel countrymen, the great English gentleman, great in adversity, and patient in the confidence that such unheard-of calamities could not last. And in the desolate drawing-room in Curzon Street, Mayfair, the Countess, who could show her love to her Lord by uncomplaining endurance of these incredible disasters, bore their reverse of fortune “as nobly as he did”.

Evidently in the neighbourhood the Burkes were known to be Lord Verney’s chief debtors, so that if that share was paid, the smaller creditors felt confident that the Earl would relieve their distress as soon as possible.

Robert Gibbs describes the contest:

21 Apr.  
1785.

“21st. Began the county election at Aylesbury for Bucks. The candidates were—Mr. Grenville, Mr. Aubrey, and Lord Verney. Mr. Grenville and Mr. Aubrey were returned by the Sheriff, but a petition was concluded by the friends of Lord Verney and was presented to the House of Commons. A time was ordered for its being heard, but was put off from time to time by ministerial influence till the 4th April 1786. It continued to the 11th of April, when the friends of Lord Verney declined proceeding any further in the business, and Mr. Aubrey was declared to be duly elected. This shows how difficult a matter it is to oppose ministerial men in expensive elections, who have the country’s money to support them with, and under the stale pretence of their being such great friends to their country, when all their proceedings show quite the reverse. The petition was attended with vast expense to Mr. Aubrey, too much for any gentlemen out of their estates to support, calculated at £50,000. The Committee appointed to try the merits of scrutiny were all friends of Mr. Aubrey, and but little success could be depended on by the friends of Lord Verney from such men, and therefore he determined to drop it. The majority in favour of Mr. Aubrey was 24 votes on the poll. The election began the 21st April, and concluded the 6th of May. There was a great riot at Aylesbury the first day of the election by the mob, who pulled down the hustings, poll booths, and every part belonging to the polling. They next attacked the George Inn, but by the spirited exertions of some gentlemen was quelled, and 80 of the rioters were committed to Aylesbury Gaol, where many of them caught the spotted fever, but they were set at liberty after the election was over, and carried that terrible disorder all round the country, where numbers of people died by the same.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Gibbs’ *Records of Bucks.*





Claydon House : West Front.



Wreaths of Wheat on the Staircase.





Already in the spring of 1784 some of the household furniture, each piece of which had been carefully selected, was sold by auction in Soho, bringing in some £263 towards a levy of £1000. Then, as now, objects that were very dear to buy were cheap to sell. A set of mahogany chairs, carved, had just been re-covered with yellow mixed damask, "an elegant lady's sedan chair with canopy and cushions, 6 mahogany back stool chairs covered with crimson silk damask and check cases, 2 small stools carved and finished to match the chairs and cases, bookcases with glass doors and green silk curtains" brought in £158, but when joined to the plate in ordinary use the sum amounted to £684, with an additional £95 when some more beautifully bound books and "a large mahogany, library book-case and two beautiful pieces of historical tapestry hangings" (the last being the most costly on the list) were brought into the sale; but what were all the precious household belongings compared to debts which seemed always to run into four figures?

Earl Verney gave ample proof of magnanimity in misfortune, if also of an artist's lack of business methods.

When the smaller creditors began to clamour, a true friend, Dr. Weekes, saw the extreme folly of a hurried sale by auction to neighbours who bid for cameos, intaglios and priceless lovelinesses from Italy as if they had been some of my Lord's whimsies of no more value than the old tokens in a Winslow curiosity shop.

As to books, they were in their proper place in libraries, but as a rule they were only tolerated in a drawing-room in an inlaid cabinet, with double glass doors, under lock and key; and if this were not enough to daunt the lover of books, their names were entirely hid by silk curtains of an approved shade of green.

Happily, Lord Verney had a few splendid friends who thought it shocking to pay things piecemeal, according to the urgency of the creditors. They were willing to persuade others, such as Sir Jonathan Lovett of Liscombe, to form an influential committee of the Earl's advisers who would have the whole position before them; and creditors were given a date and a place to which they were asked to send their claims. It was an ungrateful task for any friend, and alas! the Burkes, who owed so much for influence and loans of money, were not amongst them.

The notice ran thus:

"This Council of Trustees hope that an arrangement may be arrived at to meet these claims by regular payments of the mortgaged estate and other assets, and an allowance provided for the Earl and his Ladye to enable them to live, however modestly."

18 Aug.  
1784.

*Andrew Page, from Allextton, near Uppingham, to Earl Verney,  
at Curzon Street*

"My Lord,—I am sorry to trouble your Lordship with another letter, having received no money I am under the disagreeableness of doing it—I should imagine that Mr. Burke has by this time arrived in London and settled with your Lordship. If so, I trust your Lordship's goodness will incline you to consider my whole dependence and support is upon the receipt of my Cash in your Lordship's hands. . . . If I receive no money I shall be under the necessity of coming to town, which is a journey I am very unable to undertake, or otherwise meet your Lordship at the Audit at Claydon."

London,  
27 Aug.  
1784.

*Michael Bourke to Earl Verney*

"My dear Lord,—I had the honour to receive your kind Letter from France, by the hands of Mr. Knight, which gave me both pain and pleasure. Indeed the first part of it was a strange reverse of fickle fortune, and the latter part a kind of inspiration dictated by Heaven, which no man else but Lord V. could write. I would have done myself the pleasure, I now enjoy, sooner, where it not for my ill state of health. . . . I have much satisfaction in informing your Lordship that the Bankers in the city have had all their demands on Wm. Burke, paid them, and that I verily believe your money has also arrived in bills or cash, but won't appear to you till the bonds to you are produced and your demand on Edmund is settled. Indeed, I am told you charged William (in the account you furnished him with) with the £6,000 in question, between you and Edmund, which I do not agree to be a payment unless you got the Bonds on Condition that Edmund should be free. This you know best, and hope you have had Letters from Wm. or some Information on these Important points. Your situation is awfull and lamented by all honest men. And most people think you will yet Sitt for Bucks and that the Wendover election will be made void. I was at the meeting of your Creditors, when M——a [Macnamara] made a shotten appearance, both as to dress and language.

Sir Jonathon was great and much admired and Bryant—very well I took no notice of, nor indeed any Body else. I have been often in Curzon Street, but saw Lady V—— but once, who bears her Situation as great as you do. I am much obliged to you for

your invitation, but do believe the fine wines you mention are not so plenty, where you reside. I would indeed much rather see yourself than anything in France. I beg and pray to hear from you, as soon as possible, who am my dear Lord, your most faithful and most obedient humble servant,

MICHL. BOURKE.

Mrs. B. is growing worse in health every day, she desires to present her respects."

Mr. Archdeacon Heslop writes that—

"Miss," who is getting on in years and sees her prospects gradually diminishing, is not unnaturally difficult to deal with. "Sir Jonathon Lovett and myself have had several conferences with Miss V. but as she now requires £32,000 and does not seem to be inclined to accept an equivalent in land . . . We have declined all Negotiations on these terms, especially as there is another Way of liquidating every Debt with equal advantage, in my opinion, both to your Lordship and the Creditors."

24 Sept.  
1784.

He proposes separate sales of the principal unsettled estates of Biddlesdon and Wendover:

"It might require an Act of Parliament to exchange the attached estates, which are unsettled, and this Act might confine the Jointures to the Claydons only, which are very ample."

The Archdeacon gives an account of the dishonesty of some of the receivers of Lord Verney's rents:

". . . These observations, my Lord, give me pain being suggested by what we have already seen. . . . Whatever plan your Lordship may adopt, expedition seems most useful, for those, who readily gave their assistance, may I apprehend be unwilling to meet so considerable an expense (now the warmth of the [election] contest is abated). . . . I wait for your Lordship's pardon, with no little anxiety."

Lord Verney readily accepted Sir J. Lovett's help:

". . . I do hereby nominate, constitute and appoint Sir Johnathen Lovett—to manage and conduct all my Affairs in general—and their Determination shall be abided by.

VERNEY."

18 May  
1785.

Archdeacon Heslop, having returned to Adstock from London, sends Lord Verney a summary of the business which he has been doing for him.

". . . On my return into the country I had not only the usual Business previous to my Visitation, but from the over-modesty of my brethren, was obliged to preach the Visitation Sermon."

10 July  
1785.



Then follows a long account of the proceedings in Chancery. This letter is sent under cover to Mr. Knight of Pimlico, begging him to send it on to Lord V. by the next packet.

9 Oct.  
1785.

The Archdeacon, who was a true friend, writes again at great length to Earl Verney, warning him against dishonest friends and advising him to apply immediately "to the Court for the stipulated £2000 a year".

16 Mar.  
1785.

*Michl. Bourke, from London, to Earl Verney*

"My dear Lord,—. . . Strange to relate I never saw Mr. Walker since I wrote to you though he promised me on his return from Essex, when he said he would call and see your Estate that Chitter is concerned in, but the reason I suppose I have not seen him is that I lent him a little money to defray his expenses. I sent for Mr. Twinbarrow as you desired, who told me that the debt due to Mr. Johnston from Morriss and Caffarina was £5496 10s. and that it was not proved under the order of Chancery. Whereupon I sent him to Johnston in order to prove the debt immediately and wrote to Johnston the same time to do the needfull and have not seen either of them since, nor have I seen Mr. Twinbarrow these six weeks nor the Countess of Verney since this year began, being chiefly confined to my bed-chamber or my Parlor. . . . No news from Wm. Burke, the bankers has paid it so I believe that Edmund must have had your money before now. I am tired for[?] you Will, may God bless you and preserve you is the sincere wish my Lord of your lordship's most faithful servant,

MICHL. BOURKE.

Pray write me soon."

Sir Jonathan Lovett, Mr. Bullock and Mr. Heslop of Amen Corner, as Trustees, call a meeting of Lord Verney's Creditors, for May 22nd, 1786, at the Crown and Anchor Tavern in the Strand, "to take the Sentiments of the Creditors on Matters of importance to them", and to safeguard Miss Verney's interests.

Michael Bourke, who is one of Earl Verney's good friends, writes to him that—

22 Mar.  
1786.

"Wm. Burke has lost his employment and that he is coming home. I hope so for your sake. I am sure he has money in London. . . . A Bill for £2000 is now at the India House for acceptance in favour of the Bankers. Pray where are the Bonds for the £20,000 that was given you. I long to hear from you and hope you will tell me about your more Important affairs. May God protect you in all affairs &c."

John Crowder and Mr. Whitelock are also among Earl Verney's friends.

In June Mr. Bourke writes a dismal letter of deeds which cannot be found, and of a meeting called of creditors to which nobody came. Concluding these gloomy tidings with the hope "that you keep up your spirits and that you enjoy good health and do heartily wish my dear Lord to see you soon." 12 June  
1786.

An Inventory is wanted to know what goods are settled upon Countess Verney and what are Mrs. Calvert's. The lawyers' clerk is waiting to take an Abstract, hoping that "the ladies should have been fortunate att Cards the preceeding evening". Dec.  
1786.

Lord Verney's absence in France adds much to the delays in the business, and the Archdeacon, after writing sheet after sheet of careful suggestions, receives a letter, crossing his, from France making many of these suggestions of no avail. The various sums involved are generally in four and often five figures. The creditors include the Dean and Chapter of St. Paul's, who ought to be paid, except for the expenses Lord Verney has paid in banking out the Sea which (in the Archdeacon's opinion) should be repaid him. The Archdeacon hopes that "my last (which would pass your Lordship's on the Road) will have anticipated a considerable part of that letter." It appears later that the rents due to St. Paul's had not been paid since 1780. 18 Jan.  
1787.

There is a complicated correspondence over the sale of a farm at Biddlesdon. The tenant Bird held the estate under an agreement that all the produce of the farm should be spent upon the premises. "It seems that the Sheriff is not bound by that Agreement and that if the Covenants are broken the Landlord's only remedy is by action against the Tenant. If so, a Landlord is but poorly guarded, to bring an action against a man that is not to be found, or if found has no property left to make satisfactory the damage done." These matters furnished much material for correspondence between the solicitors, Weston and Bullock. 22 Jan.  
1787.

His friends were willing to take an immense amount of trouble for him. The Archdeacon writes a long letter to Lord Verney addressed to Monsr. F. Gale, Amiens, France.

There is a detailed answer at last signed by Lord Verney, sent from France to Mr. Sewell at the White Harp, Buckingham. It is a characteristic letter full of consideration for the various Claydon tenants. He evidently knows every acre; he remembers that in a 11 Feb.  
1787.

dry summer Hinton is short of water on Furzan Ground, and he refers to Digger's Farm, which had been the subject of a good deal of discussion in his great-grandfather's time. The various changes are to be made with strict regard for the convenience of the tenants.

The Archdeacon fears that his last letter may exceed his Lordship's patience in reading it, but he is glad to be able to add that certain vouchers and securities which seemed to have been hopelessly lost with—

24 Feb.  
1787.

"Burke's Bonds and Maclain's securities are in Mr. Macnamara's hands. . . . I must confess that Trustees stand far beyond Solicitors and yet can only see and act through them, and sometimes can do neither. . . . I must defer the rest till after our next meeting."

He writes to Mr. Twinbarrow:

About  
12 Mar.  
1787.

"... Before I had dined the thief catchers from Bow Street were here to inform me they had taken the Man—brought with them linen marked and found upon him also a key which upon trial was found to be Dr. D.'s—I attended them at Bow Street, from which I am just returned, one of the stolen shirts was brought to the Justices by a Pawn Broker—there is a Gang—so we have had an escape—but this is foreign to our Business."

He urgently requires some papers.

"Lord Verney must put us in a situation to speed Matters as soon as possible for I anxiously wish his return."

18 Nov.  
1786 and  
1 Apr.  
1787.

There are applications from Stephen Round for £10 due to him for work done at Lord V.'s election. The answer by Sir Jonathan is docketed "no gentleman".

Archdeacon Heslop seems to have employed his Good Friday in writing all these disagreeable and yet necessary details to his friend, to Amiens, France.

6 Apr.  
1787.

"... I was sorry to send a Messenger which should take your Lordship by surprise. But we delayed Business to the last Moment and then we had no Choice left but to send Express after Express and incur Expense. . . . Bryant paid the Bat—in Lincoln's Inn Hall (I think £1146 15s.). . . . I had proposed that part should be directly paid to your lordship—but did not succeed—and as Twinbarrow told me that your lordship could wait till May, I would not strive for what was not absolutely necessary. . . . I am perfectly with your Lordship that the Doctrines of the Law Courts fre-



quently contravert the doctrines and reason to which I have been used and that Law and Common Sense seem often at variance with each other. . . . Thank God we have now got rid of all Receivers for Weston yesterday received his Dismission and we must endeavour to regain by other means what may have been lost in extracting ourselves from their hands—For whilst they held the Estates etc. etc., they held also our Hands.” He repeats that Mr. Macnamara has delivered up Bourke’s Bond for £2500. The business is complicated by having passed into the hands of a solicitor (considered quite unduly wealthy), a Mr. Goodman, “who lives in Pall Mall and keeps both Chariot and Phaeton, and Fame says has got 20 to £60,000 by Matrimony. Mr. T. went with Macnamara yesterday to Goodman’s—but he was not at home. Be assured, my good Lord, that all papers shall be got as soon as possible. Our Hands have hitherto been tied—or at least our Solicitors would not suffer us to use them, but we shall now proceed with all the Speed and Vigour—T. has pledged himself—Faith alone (however great) I know will not save . . . but after Faith comes Works and I hope your Lordship in the end will not have reason to condemn mine. . . . It seems to be the general opinion that the Estates advertised, for which a sufficient offer has not been made, should be immediately sold by auction. . . . Lord Hampden has had the particulars of Wendover before him near a month. Mr. Whitbread is now desirous to purchase it for his son, who met me the other day at the Bishop of Bristol’s. . . . Pray name the lowest price we may take—that I may be prepared with an answer. £30,000 will not be given for it, I fear, if we were even to purchase Miss V.’s interest, which she rates at £2000 or more.”

14 Apr.  
1787.

Lord Verney was not too much taken up with his own troubles to forget his friend’s anxiety about a sick child.

*Archdeacon L. Heslop to Earl Verney*

June  
1787.

“ . . . I thank you for your attention to my little boy. . . poor little Fellow, he does not appear, I think—weaker—but when he awoke he is still in great pain. . . . Do not think of coming hither this evening, but if the Ladies can spare you in the morning, we shall be happy to see you, for you give great consolation to us both. Your much obliged Servant and Friend, L. HESLOP.”

The anxious parent writes again apparently the next evening.

“ . . . Your kind attention, which is so rarely met with in the Hour of Affliction, lays me under the last obligation. My dear little Boy is alive—better or worse, God knows—as also what the Effect will be. You might give a possible Guess—for I am totally ignorant.

7 o’clock.



Mr. Lucas as well as yourself mentioned a Blister. I went to Dr. Pitcairn and one was applied before 4 o'clock. I was going to an Italian Warehouse for some Florence Wine, when your servant came, a little shall be given him in his Rice Water, if he continues in his present situation. God's will be done—till then I am all Misery."

A friendly lawyer, John Forster, writes from the Temple to Sir Jonathan Lovett that he has had violent complaints from Mr. Macnamara of continued delays.

10 Aug.  
1787.

"He complains loudly of the Estates not having been sold and threatens every sort of hostile proceeding. I believe I rather pacified him by saying (as is my real Opinion) that no further time ought to be lost in attempting a sale by private contract, but that a sale by Auction ought to be tried, without further Delay, and I added, that I should express this Opinion to you and your colleagues. If this step is not adopted I think the Creditors in general and Macnamara in particular, will have (what I should be sorry to give) a just ground for Complaint, and the Consequence will inevitably be a want of confidence which will make your Situation such as that you will not be able to act with effect. I can but therefore, urge you to lose no time in putting up a part of the Estates fixt on for Sale and of such as are out of Settlement."

15 Aug.  
1787.

*From Mr. Archdeacon*

"My good Lord,—Sir Jonathen has this morning brought me a letter from Mr. Macnamara and one from Forster. He is much alarmed at the Threats conveyed in the former and urges an immediate public sale. . . . I hope your Lordship will give us your authority by return of post to sell the Estates at a lower price than hitherto mentioned.

He is in great trouble, he has no quiet even at Adstock, and the creditors seem to meet on a Sunday evening.

10 Aug.  
1787.

Mr. Macnamara continues to demand with insistence that Lord Verney's trustees should pay him—

"At least £10,000. . . . I am resolved to take every possible step against the trustees personally as well as against the Estate. I am extremely sorry to be driven to these Extremities."

The Archdeacon writes from Adstock to Mr. Knight in Pimlico, addressed as Nox among Lord Verney's friends:

6 Nov.  
1787.

". . . I met North and Marks with their Attorney at White's—Sir Jonathan was not there. Mr. B. had written his excuse but

came for a little time. Cooke, the Attorney (at my suggestion) took 14 days to consult Council, for I urged him not to involve us in lawyers. Norton is more obstinate than any Mule—and has all the Spirit of Revenge which Aubrey could wish. Mrs. and Miss Reeve have been here for some days. Mrs. H. joins in Compts. to your self and Sisters."

Mr. Bourke reports progress from Caversfield:

"... Nothing sold in London, as we were not able to clear up the matter of the tythes, which threw such an obstacle in our way with Jessop that he would not proceed. I believe General Ainsley has agreed for the Lincolnshire Estate for 17,500—there was very little between him and another. I was yesterday at Biddlesdon with a gentleman, who seemed to like it very much. . . . Biddlesdon is to be prepared for sale as soon as possible. Macnamara is full of threats." 27 Nov. 1787.

He writes again:

"... Both your letters enclosing Lord V.'s arrived yesterday. The former which I should have received on Sunday, had been mis-sent to Windsor, though no direction could be written more clear—strong—and large. Their Negligence at the Post Office is intollerable. . . . The Bart. was in a high fever—he gave me the letter, which had cost two hours in writing at Breakfast, pointing to V. on the back and desired it might be sent immediately. Another Word he did not utter and I concluded it was private business. Be not surprised if you should see Verney appointed as Chaplain to the present Ld. Lieut.—but I beg you not to mention this. I have letters from Forster, Hill, etc., to be enclosed to Lord Verney." 29 Nov. 1787.

A postscript adds that the Archdeacon is unable to send letters to Bidston, "having no horse or one with three legs only". He therefore sends the whole packet to Lady Verney, begging her to forward it without delay.

Such are the difficulties and expenses of selling land encumbered with mortgages and jointures, that Mr. Joseph Hill on behalf of Mr. Macnamara and Mr. Forster, and the Trustees in defence of Lord Verney, go on corresponding with great learning and zeal throughout the winter.

When Claydon finances had sunk so low it is refreshing to find a farmer, George Mead, when dismissed from his farm at Swanbourne, earnestly desirous of becoming a tenant of Lord Verney's. He writes to announce "the death of William Tombs of Claydon," 1 Dec. 1787.

and that Sir Jonathan Lovett has been so kind as to tell me that he would do what he could to get me into your Lordship's Rents''.

Archdeacon Heslop writes to Mr. Knight:

1787.

"Dear Sir,—Seeing Lord Verney's Hand I immediately sent out after your boy to arrest him that he might tell that Amen Corner is on the road to Corn Hill. . . . I have been confined in the morning so long that I did not get from delivering Mr. Calvert's Draft till a quarter before 5 o'clock. They have signed the Draft for Lord V. but neither of them have returned any answer (or taken any Notice of what I said concerning the Sum to be inserted). Such Silence is not the *Thing* for then I must act at my own peril."

20 Aug.  
1788.

*J. Philipps, from No. 3 King's Bench Walks, Temple, to  
The Revd. Mr. Archdeacon Heslop, at Adstock*

"Dear Sir,—I have at length travelled through all the Papers which are necessary to make out the Title (such as it is) to Wendover; and have examined the Draft of the Conveyance to Mr. Church—I must see you before it is ingrossed. The trifling Arrears that you can collect form some Difficulty—Mr. Church has been with me at Wendover, and insists that you should either rebuild the Premises which were burnt since our Contract, or that you should give up the Arrears—If you will examine, as I have done, into the Amount of what you probably can recover, you will soon discover that it will not be an Object worth your Attention. Pray inform me when you think of being in Town. If that should not happen soon, I will contrive to meet you in Buckinghamshire about the Beginning of next Month—In the mean time let me have your Answer about the Arrears—Joliffe has purchased Gatton and offers Petersfield to sale—Church has been meddling about it; and I have been exercising Authority and Dominion at Wendover without any Right in Order to fix his Attention there. I have talked largely about Building and have sent to the Brick and Lime Kilns with a view of making an early Impression on the minds of the Voters, who have already formed themselves into a Society for the Purpose of selling themselves at the General Election. We have no time to loose, and I shall be extremely anxious for the Completion of the Contract."

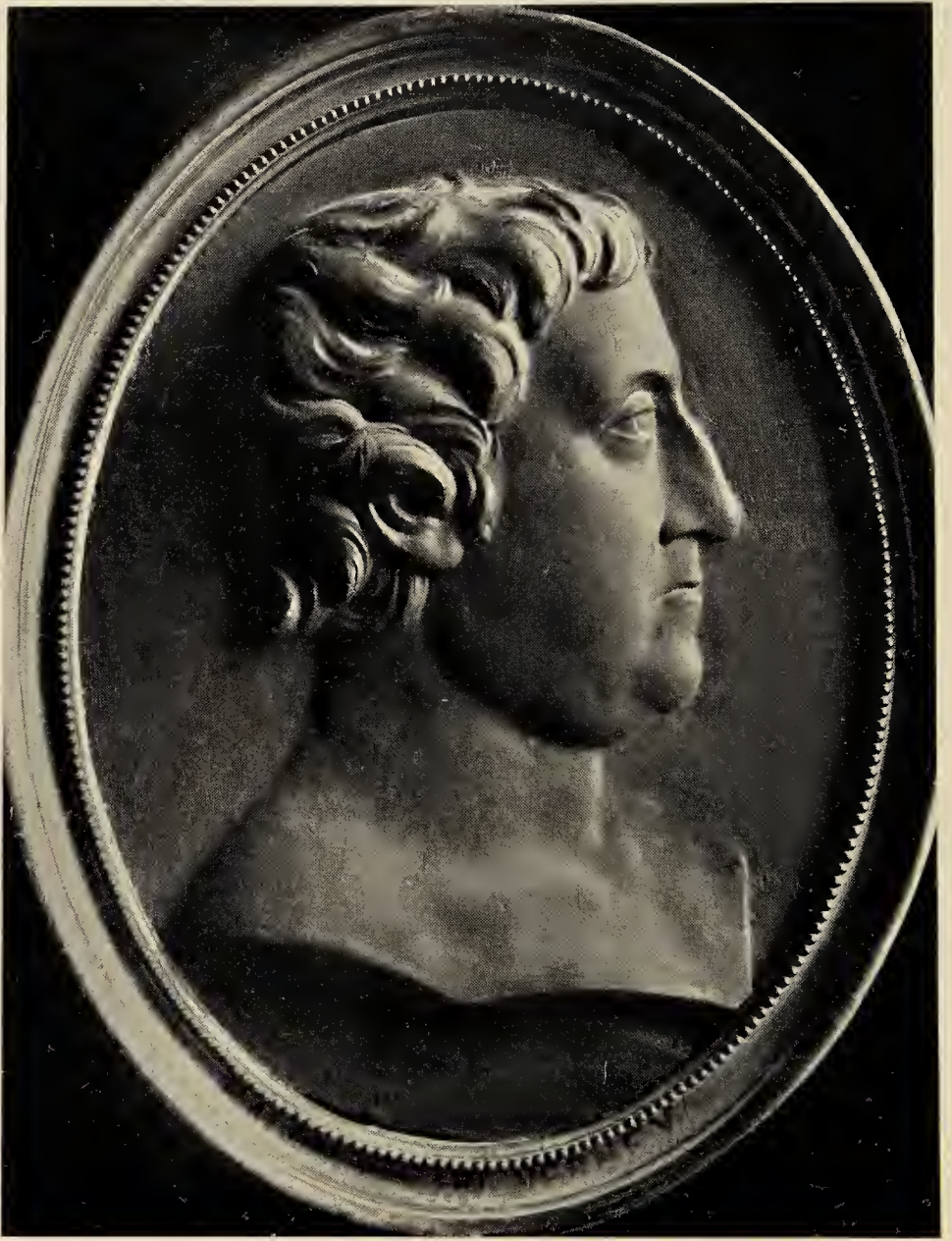
He writes again:

5 Sept.  
1788.

"Dear Sir,—I had been uneasy for some time in expectation of hearing from you, when at length your Letter was delivered to me. It would vex me beyond Measure if we could not accomplish the business that we have so far proceed in. When you do me the favour to come here you will see with how much earnestness I







Ralph, 2nd Earl Verney.

labour to complete everything. I have endeavoured to make the Strongest Impression of the Sale to us upon the Minds of this incredulous People by taking possession of George Croxford's house and becoming an Inhabitant of this celebrated town. We have not a day to lose to break a combination which has been so well formed amongst the independant Electors that it threatens to defeat the principal end of the purchase and if some means are not adopted to put us in Possession before Michaelmas Day I should be under the necessity of giving up entirely all further Interference on the subject. . . . Have the goodness to return me word what time I shall expect you. I have a bed at your service. Yours sincerely,

J. PHILIPPS."

"Close Sarum.

Your Lordship's Letter came safe to Hand this day. It gives me great concern to inform you of the death of Mr. Rogers, who departed the 27 of July. A week or more before his death he very frequent talk of his worthy Friend, Lord Verney. . . . I am your Lordship's obedient Humble Servt., SARAH KELLOW, Widow." 4 Aug. 1790.

Lord Verney was, of course, on the side of the slaves, although it meant a large pecuniary loss to himself. The following shows the rising fear and anxiety of the slave-owners when the question was first mooted.

Dr. James Walker writes from Kingston, Jamaica, to Earl Verney:

"My Lord,—. . . A Gentleman lately from London told me that you had got all Troublesome matters agreeably settled; I felt such exceeding pleasure in the report, that I cannot let the Packet go without giving your Lordship trouble and myself the pleasure of offering the most sincere Congratulations. I sincerely hope you and my Lady Verney are safely removed from the troubles in France, as well as the more personal ones in England, and that you have had substantial accounts from the East Indies. 24 Dec. 1789.

We cannot here think the Ministers serious in abolishing the Slave Trade, if they do the West Indies must find some other Protectors. They consider it as a Robbery if they don't get full compensation. The slaves themselves are afraid of it as there's not one of a hundred would take their freedom and be obliged to provide for themselves. They are infinitely happier and have less anxiety than the common people in England, the laws here are rather too much in their favour considering their proportion to white people. If Mr. Wilberforce saw what they bring to market weekly for themselves and how riotous and Social they are particularly at this season, he would envy them their happy state instead of considering them objects of humanity. Your Lordship will see the resolu-

tions of the Assembly here in the newspapers. Our Council and Assembly quarreled about a money Bill and the Governor dissolved them. We dayly expect a new Governor, the Earl of Effingham, who is said to be a good man. Perhaps your Lordship will know him. I hope I shall soon have the honour and happiness of hearing that your Lordship is in England. . . . Your obliged and most devoted humble Servant,

JAMES WALKER."

There is a postscript with a long story of Lord Verney's "Rhine Estate", which is being tried at Rome.

Dr. Walker writes again:

24 Jan.  
1790.

"My Lord,—I hope your Lordship received my letters at your old London address not having any other and presuming that your Lordship was in London presuming that you would leave France on account of the troubles there. . . . We consulted with Mr. Foster concerning an Advance of Money or a security for an Advance but upon conversing fully on the matter together with representing [?] the cruel usage with it and the certainty of Success, he agreed to proceed and to run the Risque if not immediately convenient for your Lordship, and indeed should your situation be unfortunately as yet disagreeable, my only intention by writing now, is to acquaint your Lordsp. of it. . . . I long to have the happiness of hearing that your Lordship is returned to England and has got your East India Business settled; and hope if there is a Dissolution of Parliament to find you their representative again. My daughters unite with me in offering their best respects to your Lordship and my Lady Verney."

The English settlers were in a fever of anxiety. Dr. Walker continues that he has sounded Mr. Simeon Taylour respecting a mortgage in the Windward Islands, which seems to be one of Lord Verney's very scattered possessions, but no money transactions can take place during the present uncertainty—"if the importation of slaves or their emancipation takes place, Mr. Taylour says he will abandon his great estates here and carry all his negroes to the French part of Hispaniola".

Among his numerous investments, he held stock amounting to £1053 15s. in the Company of Merchants trading to the South Seas and other parts of America for encouraging the Fishery.

Dr. James Walker writes to "Earl Verney at May Fare":

8 May  
1790.

"My Lord,—As this may not reach your Lordship till your return to England, which I hope in god may be soon both from the expected Dissolution of Parliament, and from Agreeable changes from the other Quarters, I avoid any business, and only (after



expressing my Ardent wishes that your Lordship and my Lady Verney are in good health) take the liberty of your Friendship to introduce to your acquaintance the bearer of this who has been my most sincere friend here for years past. . . . Capt. McMurdo of the 3rd. Regt. or Buffs which lately went to England from hence, was Major of Brigade to Genl. Clark during all the time of his Government here And now returns to England with the general tho' Lord Effingham wished his stay much as his health requires a Winter's bracing in Europe after being years in this climate and officially been on the Spanish main and all the Spanish or French Islands.

In America he reap'd Laurels, by rallying the Light Infantry after a Panick struck the British Troops, by which Victory was regained, and in regard to himself He is a gentleman by birth and in every respect unites with ease that Character with those of a Civil and Military nature in an eminent degree, and leaves a real blank behind him in this country. As he is fond of country sports and that kind of Exercise will be very conducive to his health in returning from a tropical climate I should be happy on every account to hear that he has spent a few days in Bucks with your Lordship. I'm sure he will be delighted there. I know your goodness too well to make any apology for this. . . ."

Earl Verney's well-known generosity exposed him to requests for the most atrocious offenders. Mr. George Box applies to him on behalf of a son, who at 16 is deeply dyed in dishonesty and deceit.

"My Lord,—My melancholy situation I hope will excuse this application to your lordship—my son whom your lordship knows and who is but little more than sixteen years of age has been seduced to the E.O. Tables where having lost some money, which he was entrusted to receive for me, for fear of a Rebuke has been induced to write the names of several Persons not in being, to receipts on certificates as having provided Substitutes in the militia by means of which he has received upwards of £400, which is a Capital Offence if prosecuted with rigour. 22 Aug. 1782.

My Infirmities for some time (being quite a Cripple from the gout) has prevented me from attending the militia business and therefore I have been obliged to entrust my Clerk and Son with the chief management of that business. . . . My Infirmities your lordship is not unacquainted with—my Distresses I daresay you feel for, but it is impossible that anyone unless he was in my situation could be a judge of what I feel—his Mother very ill of a nervous Disorder and a Depression of Spirits—she knows he is in Prison but does not know how capital the offence is, which I am afraid to acquaint her with for fear of distraction—as he is an



only son and she most tenderly fond of him. Three sisters who are passionately fond of him almost bursting with grief, which with my own age and distressed circumstances occasions me such Distraction and Agitation that I am hardly able to support myself under so great a Burthen. Tis impossible for me to settle this affair . . . without the humane assistance of my friends, amongst a number of whom I hope I may take the liberty of ranking your lordship as one in such a case of Pungent Distress. I humbly entreat your lordship directly with £40 or £50 . . . for goodness sake my lord assist me, you can't form any idea of my distress."

We must hope that Lord Verney's lavish kindness fell short of satisfying so worthless a petitioner.

Lord Verney had become surety for his friend Mr. Chapman, collector of customs at Guadaloupe, and when he failed, there was money due to the Crown.

The debts seem scattered about in all parts of the world, but it is recognized that there are many sums owing to him which if not wholly the equivalent of the others are yet considerable.

The French language and literature was more or less an indispensable part of an English gentleman's education. And a lady who had resided at Claydon continued to old age to address Lord Verney as her dear and worthy pupil. She had married a French officer of some distinction, Monsieur Hamilton de Fay, and they are living in the neighbourhood of Paris. Madame Hamilton de Fay has applied to Lord Verney at intervals across "that detestable element the sea" for help and advice. She is anxious about the state of affairs—"we have had a great deal of bussle occasioned by the fête of the 7th, and several balls, which were given by the soldiers and afterwards by the officers, nothing but Drunkenness will complete the disorders". She is writing from Amiens.

15 July  
1790.

Madame de Fay had written earlier to report that the French clergy of all ranks had been ruined by illegal taxes; that every civilian was expected to join the army; that her husband had paid for a substitute. "Imagine," she wrote to Lord Verney, "he, *officier décoré*, might have had to serve under a tinker or a cobbler." It was unthinkable.

So little had Madame de Fay estimated the course of the coming storm that she was anxious Lord Verney should send her a Peerage, as she thought a Red Book would enable her more easily to apply for help to relations and friends that she had in the English aristocracy. They gave her no relief, and exhorted her not on any

account to come to England, where a niece explained that "they have not the smallest affection for me nor any house room in which to lodge me". A little later, to be related to a duke was so mortal an offence it would have been better to prove a cousinship, if many times removed, with Robespierre's *bonne à tout faire*.

Another resident in France, Mr. Wynne, writes from Boulogne:

"... I am sorry to hear you had suffered in your health from fatigue; the passage you describe was a tedious one indeed, but thank God tis over with every other disagreeable event. I flatter myself that the rest of your Lordship's life will be a path of Roses; if now and then a Thorn should molest your step, pray Heaven it may be a blind one. 7 Aug. 1790.

I have made my application to the Directeur des Diligence relative to the payment of your Lordship's ship—for the loss of your packet, showing him the paper you put into my hand. But he pretends to know nothing of the matter."

Mr. Wynne explains that it would be equally vain to apply to the head office at Amiens.

"... There is all the assurance imaginable that this country will be in perfect Confusion. Necker has delivered his accounts, and tis reported left Paris the latter end of last week. A great disapprobation of the present Ministers by the People—such are the present times here. This letter I desire a Gent. of my Acquaintance from Paris, who is a Monsr. Montfort, a Major of the Hospital des Invalides, to drop at your House as he is going on a visit to England.

May every pleasure await you is the wish of him who is with the greatest respect your Lordship's sincere Friend and humble, affectionate Servant. T. WYNNE."

Incidentally, the terror in France gradually diminished the large dividends, which were so helpful to Lord Verney, from the Ranelagh Gardens. It was to the credit of the English nobility that they found it impossible to patronize their wonted amusements, while the news that was coming daily across the Channel was so tragic.

## CHAPTER XXXVII

### THE LAST LETTERS AND A POSTSCRIPT

WE have reached the last decade of our century, and the letters and the letter-writers are growing few.

Ralph, the last male of the Verney owners of Claydon, was a man of strong character and the best taste of that fastidious time, a patron of literature, an art collector, and above all with a passion for noble architecture.

We may rejoice that, thanks to such friends as Sir Jonathan Lovett, Archdeacon Heslop, Mr. Bullock, and others, the creditors no longer had any motive for troubling Lord Verney. He, and his patient wife, had a quiet home in Curzon Street, and he had the interest of fighting in the House of Commons for the great questions he had cared about so much.

With uncalculating generosity he had lent to friends without security of return, and large sums were owing to him when he failed. Much confidence was felt in his integrity; he retired into France till an arrangement could be made with his creditors, to which his wife generously contributed. He was recalled more than once to fight the county seat in the Whig interest.

It was really remarkable how little blame seemed to be imputed to his reckless ardour as an architect. There was hardly a neighbour with children to be educated, or a farmhouse to be repaired, or a clergyman to be helped in complicated grievances, that he failed to sympathize with, and if possible to assist. In the middle of his own troubles many little notes of thanks go to prove this. Earl Verney, with his "waggon hitched to a star", would have come to a most unsuitable and melancholy end but for the devotion and cleverness of some real friends. They had apparently paid off the smaller creditors, and the larger ones, by an arrangement which relieved Earl Verney at the expense of his successors, afforded an

honourable method of paying off at least a large proportion of their claims.

The Claydon people, who loved their kind landlord and were proud of his cleverness, probably imagined him as worse off than he really was. The house had been completely emptied, but some work, already planned, was going on quietly, and if he wanted to see how this work stood, he may have gone down alone, trusting to his people for bed and board. He was not, as they supposed, hiding from his creditors, but he may have wished his movements to be unknown—there must have been some foundation for a story repeated more than once, by men who knew him intimately and told it in dialect, though exaggerating the length of time when Lord Verney could have been at Claydon.

Legends were current within living memory, and the gossip was quite picturesque, with additions as affection and fancy prompted. Old Goody Wyse said, "Her brother-in-law's father, old Pinfold, a very trusted stone mason and carver—then a boy—was in the Courtyard at the big house one day, when he saw a man looking out of a window towards the Well. He called to Purcell, the carpenter, for the house was entirely stripped from top to bottom, nothing left in it except a woman who took care of it and lived somewhere downstairs. 'Hush,' said Purcell, 'you hold your tongue, 'tis my old Lord.' Lord Verney was then quite an old man. He had come down, they said, in a hamper from London Town, and then he hid in the big house—all empty. When Purcell went to him, he bid him go to the Rectory and borrow a bed and mattress, and that he did. And they got him summat to eat, and kept him privat, months they did, and there he hid—nobody telled on him; none knowing on him being there, scarce, but Purcell and Pinfold." <sup>1</sup>

Another story was told by an old lady about the same time: "You know he'd moved the dead out of the churchyard, along by the house, and carried 'em down alongside the water, for to get more room, you know. But they was all back again afore morning, they were. Who brought 'em back? Ah, there, nobody ever knowed how t'were, but there they was back again. They cared for 'im for some things, but folk couldn't abide *that*, and the little 'uns used to call after he as he passed, 'Who moved the dead?' He were never there, so to speak, after that." <sup>2</sup>

As Earl Verney grew older, and his mind had been so agreeably

<sup>1</sup> *Verney Memoirs* (3rd edition), i. p. 13. Longmans.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*



filled with projects of beauty and utility, letters about his debts bothered him so much that he often took the simple course of ignoring them. His failure to answer letters was a grievance constantly resented by the friends who were trying to help him. That this arose from no failure of his mental powers is shown by a correspondence with Sir Richard Heron, chief secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland.

Aug.  
1790.

*Earl Verney to Sir Richard Heron*

"Dear Sir,—I am facd. with your Letter of the 8th Inst.—respecting Mr. and Mrs. Gundry: but I should first be glad to see the Draft of the Deed I am required to execute, as settled by Counl. Whatsoever is judged proper for me to do I shall be happy to concur in, As I am not at present sufficiently master of the Business to give a definitive answer.

You may remember that some years ago I found it necessary to apply to the Court of Chancery against Messrs. Simond and Hankey, Trustees of Mr. Maclean's Estates, and that I was induced to drop the proceedings on your assuring me that I should be furnished with every particular I wished respecting that property—since which I have applied innumerable times to them for particulars of the Estate, but to this day have not been able to obtain any thing satisfactory: and now find at the distance of at least a dozen years am obliged to revive the proceedings. Present our best respects to Lady Heron from Your Lordship's, etc."

There were also complications at Claydon with which he was well able to deal. One of the Millwards—Edmund—was instituted in 1760 to the Rectory of Middle Claydon, where he was to reign for forty-seven years. Some of the younger members of his family were perhaps out of control while the big house was empty.

12 Aug.  
1790.

*Jack White to Earl Verney*

"... I hope in god these lines will find your Lordship in better health. My Lord I should be Glad if you please to send me a pound of Silk to mend the Covy nets for I used all the Silk I have, for they are tore very much and so are the Silk flews allso. I should be glad to have it very soon. My Lord, Young Mr. Thomas Millward has got a pointer and a Shooting horse allso. I should be glad if your Lordship Please to write to old Mr. Millward and desire his Son not to Kill the birds about home as they are but few, for I think it will be hard to me, to save the birds and he goe and kill them; he may if he please go along with me a shooting when I go





Plaster Work on the Staircase.

from home. My Lord, they have don a mowing in the Park and they will make a full finish of all tomorrow, when I go A setting. I hope your Lordship will let my son have Grey nag to ride when I go A setting. Mr. Oliver looked at the room in East Claydon yard to put the partridges in, which will do well for them, there will be plenty of Son for the birds, which they like, there wants nothing moor to Be don to it but the two windows to be lathed. From your most faithful Servant,  
 JACK WHITE."

Adequate supervision was sadly lacking of the delicate plaster-work with which that consummate artist Bernascone was still busy at Buckingham. He did indeed complain, after Sir Thomas Robinson's death, that his designs must have been tampered with, and he did not consider them worthy of his craft. This may, perhaps, account for the contrast between the florid and rather coarse decoration in the North Hall, compared with the restrained and delicate beauty of the work in the Saloon.

The claims of creditors, who failed to attend the meetings especially arranged by the trustees to hear their demands, and the frequent and sometimes unexpected general elections, must have made Earl Verney's life a restless one. He had to be in Bucks as a candidate, and be out of the way if he failed to be elected, and therefore he was hurried about across the Channel in any weather, and in any inadequate fishing-boat, until his last triumphant return as popular Member for Bucks for a seat which he retained till his death.

*Joseph Bullock, from Caversfield, to Earl Verney, in  
 Curzon Street*

17 July  
 1790.

"My dear Lord,—I am extremely sorry I had not the pleasure of your Lordship's Company for the Assizes and much more so for the cause of it. Pray let me know that you are recovered of your indisposition. I apprehend the hurry of coming to me, or improper bathing has been the cause of it, if your Lordship is recovered, as I hope, you must want to see Claydon and Biddlesdon; Caversfield lays between both and I insist on you coming here and staying as long as you possibly can. Mrs. B. and I are quite alone and will be so as long as your Lordship stays. You shall see no-one but the Bishop, we four will make a rubber at Whist in the evening. I have a safe horse, a post chaise, and a little low phaeton; you will use which you please. . . . Our Assizes were but thinly attended and very little business done. Lord Loughborough did not come, the Marquis of Bucks was there, Mr. Secretary Grenville, for our Fore-



man, Sir William Young, Selby, Fremantle, myself and the Newport people made up the Grand Jury.

At the Judge's table when the Knights of the Shire were toasted, the Marquis turned to me and particularly congratulated me on your election, enquired after your health and was very sorry you was prevented being there. 'Twas very civil. Mrs. B. unites in best respects to Lady Verney. . . . Your most affectionate and faithful friend and Servant.  
JOS. BULLOCK."

7 Dec.  
1790.

He had not given up his social and Parliamentary friends; there is an invitation from Jeffrey, Lord Amherst, Commander-in-Chief of the Forces, and one from the Duke of Portland requesting the "Honour of your Lordship's Company at Burlington House on Sunday the 12th Instant at nine o'Clock in the Evening".

Henry Uthwatt Andrewes and other neighbours congratulate him on his return to his former interests.

19 Aug.  
1790.

In August his insatiable French friend acknowledges the receipt of a bank-note, "which is indeed a very seasonable relief. . . . The Duke of Devonshire Embark'd this morning with all his Family and Suite, they took up 4 Packet Boats."

Mr. Joseph Bullock writes:

4 Oct.  
1790.

"My Dear Lord,—I am very sorry to hear that Lady Verney is so much indisposed, I hope she will soon be better. . . . I have a very alarming account of Lord Romeny's state of health, should the worst happen, it will prevent me having the pleasure of meeting your Lordship at Quarter Sessions, next Thursday.

My friend Mr. Coker commissions me to offer for Gravesend Farm and for what he holds, and the manor of Abethorpe, £8375 the buildings to be completed on the Charbock Farm as intended. The money is ready as soon as the Conveyance can be made. I take for granted your Lordship will embrace this offer from which their will be no claims and deductions for negotiation. . . . Pray accept and present our respects to Lady Verney—my dear Lord ever your Lordship's most faithfully and affectionately,

JOS. BULLOCK."

16 Oct.  
1790.

More than one county neighbour was anxious to lend his country house to their newly elected Member. Sir Jonathan Lovett, who has been a constant and influential friend, writes after the election hoping that Lord Verney may be induced to return to Chelsea, "and as Claydon is not in a Situation to receive you, Liscombe, though but a poor substitute is very much at your service".

The *Gentleman's Magazine* mentions in a summary of the Earl's

life: "For many years before his death his affairs were in the greatest confusion, owing to some friends,<sup>1</sup> who induced him to speculate in Change-Alley."

Not all the petitions for money are worth reproducing among the last letters, but Lord Verney seems to have settled his friends, the de la Fays, over the Dutch border, so that the "decorated officer" escaped the humiliation of serving under a tinker, or the perhaps more serious one of losing his distinguished head.

When Lord Verney had last crossed over from Calais to England, his friends living at the port had the pleasure of sending a man running at top speed to the ship with the cane Lord Verney had left behind. Lord Verney duly rewarded the man in his next letter, but it seemed more than Monsieur de la Fay could manage, to write without reminding the friend who was so harassed with money troubles that a £10 bank-note would be very serviceable. 9 July  
1790.

A distressed lady, Anna Bricknock, appeals to Lord Verney to help her. Her husband has been dead four years. "He left me penniless and I may say almost friendless, for few, very few, are friends to the distressed. He had, I believe, at the time of his death three hundred pound but that and everything went together. Believe me, my Lord, I have not been Mistress of sixpence for some months, not even of a dish of Tea, and that is the greatest comfort I have now." (She writes from St. George's Workhouse, Mount Street.) 15 Aug.  
1790.

There are claims on behalf of Lord Verney to the Duchy rights on Grange Moor. 5 Jan.  
1791.

*Sir Robert Clayton, Mardin Park, Godstone, Surrey, writes to Earl Verney* 12 Sept.  
1790.

"My Dear Lord,—I am sure nobody has been more ready to show you any service in Bucks that I have been . . . you had this time all the Marlow Votes for Bucks. The Marquis of Buckingham and Sir John Aubrey, Bart. subscribed to Marlow Bridge. I subscribed £50 but that was in Compt. to my cousin Mr. Clayton for his place was nothing without Marlow Bridge—if your Lordship would subscribe 10 guineas it would be Establishing your Interest as well as greatly supporting mine. . . . Please pay it to Wm. Clayton

<sup>1</sup> "One of these now lives in the greatest splendour in the East Indies, but has not thought it necessary to remit any part of the large debt due from him to his Lordship."—*Gentleman's Magazine*, July 1791.

Esqre., Harleyford near Gt. Marlow. Bucks. . . . Your most affectionate Relation,  
ROBT. CLAYTON."

Sir Robert Clayton was a nephew of Lady Verney's.

Paris,  
12 July  
1790.

*Dr. Felix MacDonogh to Earl Verney*

"My dear Lord,—I have already heard of your late success in the County of Bucks. by whom you are now re-elected. I feel really happy that they have resumed those sentiments of Independence, which ought to characterise the Choice of a Representative, and that your lordship's long Absence has not diminished their regard for you. You have now the happiness of again appearing in the Honourable Station you have filled, and of seeing yourself once more out of the Reach of the Attempts of malicious Creditors. When I congratulate your lordship on this, you cannot doubt of my disinterestedness—give me leave however to mention that it is the proper Moment to distinguish between the rapacious and the equitable Demand. The Claims of Patience and Long Suffering will surely speak more forcibly to your heart than any other, and arrest your first attention."

His political services, though opposed to the Court and to everything that called itself genteel, were unexpectedly recognized by the freeholders on whom the seat depended, when "in June 1790 another general election burst upon the country. The clamour for the popular candidate drowned all other cries; Lord Verney's agent wrote that he would try to limit his expenses to £12,000 or £15,000. Processions carrying banners converged on Aylesbury from all the neighbouring districts, two hundred gentlemen breakfasted at Claydon House, three hundred of the meaner sort were fed with the remnants of the meal; he was triumphantly returned and the country rang with his praises."<sup>1</sup>

This popularity must greatly have increased the value of his vote in the House. The applause given to the man had been of slow growth, but it lasted.

Mary Herring, Countess Verney, seems the least interesting of all the Chatelaines of Claydon. She has left no letters, and her likeness, which has recently been recovered from a black medallion, reveals a kindly modern type of English face without any special charm or cleverness.

But we must remember that in the first years of her married life Mary, then Lady Fermanagh, experienced the same disappoint-

<sup>1</sup> *Dict. of Nat. Biog.*



ments as Queen Anne, for which the science of the day had no remedy to offer. Mr. Herring, an important man in the Bank of England, had taken a great fancy to Claydon and naturally wished for grandchildren of his own to inherit it. The young wife therefore felt she was disappointing her own family as well as the Verneys. Later her patience in adversity, and her generosity with her own money (which was amply secured to herself) and personal jewels, in her husband's difficulties, appealed to all who knew her. Her health continued to be delicate, in spite of the ministrations of the She-Ass, who was, as ever, the last ally of the physician.

The house in Curzon Street had been furnished fifty years before, and therefore we may hope that it was pleasant and harmonious. Can we not imagine in those last years of peace, the old couple seated by a fire liberally supplied with logs from Claydon, and discussing the events of more than half a century of married life.

Had they alienated the little "Miss's" mother by too vehement an objection to her marrying again so soon, after all she had only been a wife for eleven months. It may have occurred to them then (as the ghosts of our old mistakes have a habit of revisiting us) that they were too outspoken. After Mr. Nicholson's death in 1745, they saw less of the little girl than when she came to Clapham.

There were pretty little letters in a large text hand from other grandchildren after visits to Claydon and Chelsea. The only scrap of Mary's was a postscript to her grandfather's letter, on one of the rare visits she and her mother paid to Chelsea.

P.S. in a large child's hand: "Pray desire Holton to make what haste he can with my Mama's and my shoes." Pity that the little feet so seldom pattered about the childless home at Claydon. Certainly it was a most unexpected and curious story that of John's orphan girl—who played so small a part in the lives of those who had idolized her father. They did not doubt that she would be both happy and well educated, but how strange it seemed that she should know nothing of Claydon, and that she was brought up in an atmosphere of disapproval of her uncle's political career.

It is grievous to find how small was her connection with the old and new rooms at Claydon. The only time we seem able to trace her is a reference in 1748 to her being there with her grandparents when Lady Betty and Lord Sherard were married. This was certainly from no lack of invitation from her Verney grandparents, whether to Claydon or to Chelsea.



She stood for a large fortune which the creditors could not touch, her money being safeguarded in every way. It would certainly have softened the curious situation if "Miss" could have been much at Claydon and taken her share in the calamities that had overtaken the family, and helped in the choice of any books or rarities kept back from the unhappy sale, which included the plate in daily use.

How soothing to both generations would have been the constant presence of this lonely girl, and what a comforter she would have been when money troubles thickened. She had, it is true, congenial companions in her almost contemporary half-sister, Catherine Calvert, and the two half-brothers, George and Richard Calvert, who were painted by Abbott: but her story during all these years was singularly bare as far as Claydon was concerned. The constant appeals for funds for her maintenance were not accompanied by any account of her progress, education, tastes or proficiency. Whatever the reason, the Calverts were resolved to keep the little Verney heiress to themselves, and she does not seem even to have been brought up in the county where her future possessions lay—but to have lived chiefly in Kent and Herts. The girl's apparent loneliness is the more remarkable as her mother lived through all these years, and only died in 1789, at Hall Place, Kent.

In a century when it meant so much to have a title (even of Irish extraction), it so happened that all the ladies of Claydon had this garnish to their names. A Countess, a Viscountess, and many Honourables and Right Honourables were to be met with at every turn; the only exception was the lady who was heiress to it all. "Miss" she was, and "Miss" she continued to be, though "Miss" in her teens had become "Miss" in her fifties. She was sometimes entertained by her relations the Knapps of Linford, but as far as her father's people were concerned, the only letters received from her guardian related to money. Had she ever seen her uncle's wonderful work? We cannot answer the question, but when at last the storm-tossed owner and his wife were laid in the family vault, "Miss" was left as the last of the male branch of the Verneys of Claydon.

Lord Verney never wished to curtail any necessary expense for the child. She was all that remained to him of his beloved son. He and his heir kept up affectionate relations with the Calvert family, and Lord Fermanagh writes to his father after a visit which Mr. and Mrs. Calvert had paid to him at Claydon:

“ . . . Mr. and Mrs. Calvert left us on Thursday morning, I could not persuade em to stay any longer. . . . They had meant to stay at Mr. Knapp’s about a week, and a week here, but Mrs. Calvert of Pelham’s illness prevented their coming to Linford, they were obliged to be at home before Odsey races begin.” 16 Sept.  
1744.

On January the 20th, 1791, Mary, Countess Verney, *née* Herring, suddenly died in Curzon Street, aged nearly 76. She was buried on her birthday, February the 4th, at Middle Claydon. He could not live without her, and on the 31st of the next month Earl Verney died, also in Curzon Street, aged 78, and was buried in the family vault on April 8, 1791.

The impression they left in the county may be read in the *Gentleman’s Magazine*.<sup>1</sup>

That Ralph, the last Earl Verney, did not die an embittered as well as an impoverished man, must be attributed to his love of beauty for its own sake; he did not build to perpetuate his own memory. If he had lived in the Middle Ages, he would have thought of himself as a knight in silver armour, fighting against all that was dark and evil, not for his own glorification but for Christendom. His Saloon has long been the centre of every Claydon gathering, and his fairy staircase and beautiful rooms with their tall inlaid doors still make Claydon more interesting than most country houses of the period. Of all the owners of Claydon, his name is the best remembered and beloved. Beauty has its quiet voice, understood of the people, and always sweet and gracious.

<sup>1</sup> *Gentleman’s Magazine*, January 1791 and April 1791.

## THE POSTSCRIPT

THE Calvert family, doubtless with the best motives, had determined to bring up the little Verney heiress entirely in their own traditions, but when the vault closed over the mortal remains of the last Earl Verney, she could be considered a Calvert no longer. "Miss" belonged to Claydon, and Claydon belonged to "Miss".

There is such a contrast between the last male owner of Claydon and the gentle maiden lady of fifty-five, who succeeded to what was left of his great possessions, that it is as if a long chronicle ended in a comma. No letters of hers have been preserved, and what little we know of her career seems just a postscript to the vigorous letters we have dealt with. There are most ill-omened sounds, unheard before at Claydon, of the falling down of the fine work, some finished, some not fully carried out. Webb, the time-honoured house-carpenter, was painting one of the panels in the cornice of the ballroom, when he was bidden to desist, as his next job was likely to be the destruction of all that he had been working at.

We do not know whom she consulted in the expensive and thankless task of destroying the Marble Hall and the half-finished ballroom, which a maiden lady of fifty-five might not consider so indispensable to a country house as she would have done thirty years earlier.

When the dust of demolition was at last cleared away, a few rooms were furnished, so that by the end of the century some guests could be received in what it seemed a mockery to call "hospitable Claydon". Before that time "Miss" had at length changed her name. The Prime Minister, looking about for support in his difficult task of serving both the King and the Nation, was struck with the solitary figure possessed of so much political influence; he created her Baroness Fermanagh in her own right. The patent follows; its formal language is full of inaccuracies; there had been no former Barons, and none were to follow her.





Mary [Verney], Baroness Fermanagh.





"Constat of the Dignity of Baroness granted to Mary Verney Oct.  
13th. June 32nd year of George III., with all the privileges, pre- 1792.  
heminences, Honors, Immunities, Commodities, Advantages and  
Emoluments to such state, Degree, Stile, and Title . . . as the  
other Barons . . . have heretofore Honorably and Magnificently  
used and enjoyed."

This satisfied Claydon and her own modest self. She did not live there much, but her name is associated with many acts of kindness. The agent of the estate having wound up Earl Verney's affairs is looking for another job. Baroness Fermanagh (Manchester Square, London) has allowed him £100 a year for life. She also made a permanent addition to the scanty provision for the old people in Sir Ralph's Almshouses.

The creditors had no claim during the lifetime of "Miss", but she helped them in the handsomest manner by again selling part of the estate.

Baroness Fermanagh left many good portraits at Claydon House. She had the family taste for collecting, and a later mistress found that one of her drawers contained twenty-one fans; another was full of optical instruments, lenses, opera-glasses, spectacles; then came a heap of knives and scissors of all sorts and sizes, twenty or thirty of each; next tools for knotting, netting, tatting, and knitting, in ivory, bone and tortoise-shell, carved and plain, useless and useful; boxes upon boxes of painting materials, chinks, paper of all colours, rulers, brushes, pencils, gold-leaf, compasses, palettes, enough to stock a shop. But, though so much nearer in time, there is less known of her than of the old worthies; and one of the few traditions is that "my Lady" was used to ride about behind her coachman on a pillion (which was still preserved a short time ago), "feeling timid for a single horse".

The Baroness was not only the owner of Claydon but she had the power to leave it by will, and it must have been a great pleasure to her to bequeath it to her dearly-loved half-sister, Catherine Calvert, on the single condition of her assuming the old name.

Baroness Fermanagh lived on for ten years of the next century. The story of her Calvert successors is an interesting one, but that is not our story.

## ENVOI

OUT of deep drawers seldom opened; and nice old baize-lined boxes with brass handles, and keys generally lost; and shelves full of musty deeds and brown-paper parcels, these letters are audaciously emerging and challenging the sympathy of a world which has scarcely time to read its own correspondence, and greatly prefers the compact message of a telegram or telephone.

It seems much to hope that anybody will find time to read such leisurely productions, many of which had been labelled in the intervening century

### PRIVATE LETTERS, OF NO INTEREST, TO BE BURNT.

Excepting for the social and political emancipation of women, the changes are mostly external, like the disappearance of the hoop-petticoats and the lumbering coaches. In essentials, the life portrayed in this Family Chronicle is the same as our own. There is the English love of Home and Kindred, and the prompt response which our men have always made to the call for unpaid public work.

And so there is a charm about these Letters; in the passing of two hundred years, the large red seals, the home-made ink and the home-made love have not lost their freshness. Very vividly they bring back the old days,

Renewing life's eventful page,  
And noting, ere they fade away,  
The little lines of yesterday.

Both Claydon House and the Palace at Stowe, which had latterly been social and political rivals—"a little more than kin and less than kind"—were fated to go through the Valley of Humiliation, and to know the bitterness of sales and bankruptcy with the scattering of the hoarded treasures of many generations.

But this was not the end.

Stowe has found a new sphere as a public school, which with so fine an historical background has every prospect of future greatness; and boys may there form friendships less artificial and more durable than those to which temples at Stowe in the eighteenth century were dedicated.

Claydon House went through a period of desolation, when the very rooks and swallows were said to avoid a house so deserted, and a park so treeless. The soft electric lamps, which light up the Vandykes and Lelys and reveal all the detail of the beautiful ceiling in Lord Verney's Saloon, would not surprise him more than the little crowd of robust and active children, in and around the house, as much stronger than the fragile infants of Queen Anne's reign as the arc lights are brighter than the old home-made candles.

Having brought the letters over the edge of the next century, they seem to cease at the right moment—black clouds were gathering, most darkly in France. But at home there comes a vision of Jenner slaying the Giant Smallpox; and of Florence Nightingale spending long, fruitful weeks at Claydon House; and of her shadowy train of white-capped Nurses girdling the world. So our respectable old friend the She-Ass, who has trotted with us so patiently through the whole century, could not survive in importance, and with her the Editor disappears.

MARGARET M. VERNEY,

CLAYDON HOUSE,  
BUCKS.

*September 1928.*







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